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BUILDING OPPORTUNITY:

DISASTER RESPONSE AND RECOVERY AFTER THE 1773 EARTHQUAKE

IN ANTIGUA GUATEMALA

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IN ANTIGUA GUATEMALA

by

Mauricio A. Pajon, B.A.; M.A.

Dissertation

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Dedication

To Michael, Holly, and Lucía.

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Mauricio A. Pajon, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2013

Supervisor: Susan Deans-Smith

Building Opportunity centers on disaster response and recovery after a 7.5-magnitude earthquake destroyed the city of Antigua Guatemala, the capital of colonial Guatemala, on July 29, 1773. It also concentrates on the colonial government's decision to relocate Antigua Guatemala and establish a new capital, New Guatemala. This dissertation examines how the cultural, economic, political, and social views of inhabitants – bureaucrats, clerics, Indians, architects, and the poor – shaped their reactions to the tremor. Furthermore, it contends that the migration from Antigua Guatemala to New Guatemala created socioeconomic opportunities through which individuals made strong efforts to rebuild their lives.

Debates on natural catastrophe in colonial Latin America have emphasized the ability of calamity to ignite power struggles over competing ideas about emergency management. However, in addition to an analysis of such disputes, this dissertation

advances new understandings of the ways in which the earthquake gave victims chances to reshape their world. How did individuals' beliefs influence their attitudes toward the cataclysm? How did the effort to create a new city forge openings for survivors to refashion their identities?

This study shows that individual groups' notions of fear, hazard mitigation, history, and socioeconomics defined arguments about whether or not to move. It also demonstrates that the tragedy produced spaces in which officials, ecclesiastics, indigenous peoples, and the impoverished worked to improve their lives. In various ways, administrators and victims turned adversity into an opportunity to become disaster managers and survivors, respectively.

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Introduction

> In the morning, the whole world had a strange new smell. It was the smell of the aftermath, a green smell, a smell of shredded leaves and oozing resin, of crushed wood and splashed sap, a tart smell, which bore some relation to the smell of bitten apples. It was the smell of death and destruction and it smelled fresh, lively and hopeful.
>
> – A. S. Byatt, *Possession: A Romance*

For the 40,000 residents of Antigua Guatemala, the capital of colonial Guatemala, the year 1773 was an annus mirabilis, a year of wonders.[1] At 3:30 P.M. on July 29th, the city experienced a powerful foreshock; fifteen minutes later a massive 7.5-magnitude earthquake devastated Antigua Guatemala. According to Senior *Audiencia* (High Court) Judge Juan González Bustillo, "it was, in truth, a horrific and frightful day – a day in which it seemed as if God, angry with our sins, had decided to end the lives of the inhabitants of [Antigua Guatemala]." González Bustillo interpreted the first shock as "advance notice [from God] so that we would not perish in the ruins and so that we would have time to offer [Him] sacrifices, honors, and praise." He argued that the second tremor had

[1] After the 1773 earthquake, eyewitnesses referred to the former capital of Guatemala as Santiago de Guatemala, Guatemala City, or Antigua Guatemala. To avoid confusion in this dissertation, I am going to call the old city Antigua Guatemala and the new one New Guatemala.

"destroyed all or most of [the capital's] public buildings and private homes or at least reduced them to a deplorable state within two seconds."[2]

Figure 1. Map of Guatemala. Source: USGS, *Major Volcanoes of Guatemala*, accessed August 15, 2013, http://vulcan.wr.usgs.gov/Volcanoes/Guatemala/Maps/map_guatemala_volcanoes.html.

[2] Juan González Bustillo, *Extracto, ô relacion methodica, y puntual de los autos de reconocimiento, praticado en virtud de comission del señor presidente de la real audiencia de este reino de Guatemala* (Mixco: Antonio Sánchez Cubillas, 1774), 13-14.

The municipal and religious authorities also believed that God was angry, were afraid, and saw the earthquake as an agent of change. The city council asserted that God "justly irritated with sinners, by the repetition of our sins, had taken out His anger on the city, destroying it entirely on the afternoon of July 29th." The city council declared, "the ground had boiled beneath our feet, as if tired of suffering us, without allowing us to stand." The city council members insisted that the earth had shaken so uncontrollably that it had "made bells ring frightfully and toppled towers, churches, palaces, public buildings, and even the most humble huts." They maintained that the disaster had transformed Antigua Guatemala from a "magnificent, sumptuous, affluent, wealthy, beautiful, and peaceful" capital to a "confused cluster of ruins."[3] According to Father Felipe Cadena, "that day, Antigua Guatemala had the appearance of a shattered corpse, truly worthy of pity."[4]

In addition to having demolished Antigua Guatemala, the calamity also led to a breakdown of social and political structures that defined late eighteenth-century life in the capital. According to Cadena, the "most honest women and

[3] Carta del 31 de agosto de 1773, dirigida por el Ayuntamiento a su Majestad, informándole de la ruina acaecida el 29 de julio y solicitando algunas providencias en favor del vecindario," in *Boletín del Archivo General del Gobierno* 8, no. 1 (March 1943): 154-157.
[4] Felipe Cadena, *Breve descripción de la noble ciudad de Santiago de los Caballeros de Guatemala, y puntual noticia de su lamentable ruina ocasionada de un violento terremoto el día veintinueve de julio de 1773* (Guatemala: Imprenta de Luna, 1858): 19.

the most secluded clerics had left behind their sense of modesty when they fled from their homes and appeared in public in their dressing gowns." Nuns evacuated their convents, breaking their vow of enclosure. Fearful of the risk of remaining indoors, hospital patients abandoned their beds and sought refuge outdoors. Prisoners escaped after the earthquake destroyed the city's jails.[5] González Bustillo argued that some convicts fled immediately, while others remained in the main plaza, removing their chains and "adding to the horrific spectacle of seeing the most serious felons mixed with the most distinguished, not excepting the judges and ministers who witnessed everything."[6] As throngs of people started to fill the streets, "the plazas and unoccupied spaces became a confused and chaotic mix of people from all hierarchies." Feeling "upset, afraid, and alone," "parents neglected their children [and] husbands disregarded their wives." A few, such as Antonio Hermosillo, the justice of the peace-elect of Sonsonate, "died from fright."[7]

Immediately after the catastrophe, residents, the colonial government, and the Catholic Church contributed to the disaster response effort in various ways.

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[5] Ibid., 14.
[6] González Bustillo, *Extracto, ô relacion methodica, y puntual de los autos de reconocimiento, praticado en virtud de comission del señor presidente de la real audiencia de este reino de Guatemala*, 15.
[7] Felipe Cadena, *Breve descripción de la noble ciudad de Santiago de los Caballeros de Guatemala, y puntual noticia de su lamentable ruina ocasionada de un violento terremoto el día veintinueve de julio de 1773*, 14-15.

González Bustillo argued that many devout Catholics sought out priests to confess their sins, while others received absolution. Everyone asked God for mercy.[8] They took out the monstrance from within the ruins of the cathedral and built a thatched cottage in the main plaza where they placed it for safekeeping.[9] He asserted that a miracle had spared the lives of Antigua Guatemala's political and religious leaders, including Archbishop Pedro Cortés y Larraz and Captain General Martín de Mayorga. After escaping from the captain general's palace, Mayorga and González Bustillo encouraged everyone to continue to pray to God for forgiveness.[10] They stationed militiamen at monasteries and convents throughout the capital to prevent theft.[11] González Bustillo extended various orders on old documents and fashioned a quill out of a reed until he was able to find an inkwell.[12] The captain general also made a strong effort to feed the living. Mayorga repaired roads to allow meat suppliers to transport livestock to the city's slaughterhouse. He ordered Indians from Antigua Guatemala's surrounding towns to bring their crops to the capital without delay. He fixed mills and ovens, extracted wheat, corn, and vegetables from within the ruins,

[8] González Bustillo, *Extracto ô, ô relacion methodica, y puntual de los autos de reconocimiento, praticado en virtud de comission del señor presidente de la real audiencia de este reino de Guatemala*, 14.
[9] Ibid., 15-16.
[10] Ibid., 15.
[11] Ibid., 16-17.
[12] Ibid., 18.

and distributed 200 trunks of biscuits that had been bound for Central American forts to the religious orders and the poor.[13]

The Catholic Church gave the dead proper Christian burials, encouraged confessions, practiced acts of charity, and led religious processions as part its participation in the crisis response initiative. Archbishop Pedro Cortés y Larraz commissioned ecclesiastics to help colonial officials to inter dead bodies as an act of Christian piety and to prevent the spread of disease.[14] Cortés y Larraz promoted penitence as a way to placate an angry God. He administered the sacrament of penance himself, and, when he saw that he could not hear everyone's confessions alone, he designated priests throughout Antigua Guatemala to provide penitents with spiritual comfort.[15] He donated money and food, including meat, cheese, tamales, and tortillas to the poor, amazing everyone when he went out among the needy and distributed such assistance with his own hands.[16] Finally, the archbishop led a religious procession around

[13] Ibid., 18-19.
[14] Felipe Cadena, *Breve descripción de la noble ciudad de Santiago de los Caballeros de Guatemala, y puntual noticia de su lamentable ruina ocasionada de un violento terremoto el día veintinueve de julio de 1773*, 24.
[15] Ibid., 29.
[16] Ibid., 31.

the main plaza to alleviate earthquake victims' suffering and give them spiritual consolation.[17]

Long-term disaster recovery in late eighteenth-century Guatemala created economic, political, and social openings through which administrators, ecclesiastics, indigenous peoples, architects and artisans, and earthquake victims tried to reassert themselves and repair their world. A week after the earthquake, the captain general proposed the relocation of Antigua Guatemala and created a scientific commissioned to explore the suggested sites for the migration.[18] Throughout the remainder of the 1770s, supporters and opponents of the move employed environmental, historical, and socioeconomic arguments in favor of or against the resettlement of the population. The colonial government argued that the Valley of La Ermita was safer than the old capital because it did not experience catastrophic earthquakes.[19] Despite such arguments, the city council and the archbishop asserted that it was impossible to know the destructiveness

[17] Carta del 31 de agosto de 1773, dirigida por el Ayuntamiento a su Majestad, informándole de la ruina acaecida el 29 de julio y solicitando algunas providencias en favor del vecindario," in *Boletín del Archivo General del Gobierno* 8, no. 1 (March 1943): 157-158.
[18] González Bustillo, *Extracto, ô relacion methodica, y puntual de los autos de reconocimiento, praticado en virtud de comission del señor presidente de la real audiencia de este reino de Guatemala*, 26 and 28.
[19] Ibid., 51-52.

of the disaster in La Ermita because there were relatively few buildings there.[20] They also contended that the poor could not afford to pay to move from old city to the new one and that establishing Antigua Guatemala elsewhere was senseless because tremors occurred throughout Central America.[21]

In addition to power struggles over the relocation, fear, revolt, ideas over earthquake-resistant buildings, and self-fashioning shaped responses to the earthquake. Nuns took part in emergency management efforts through leading a religious procession and through singing sacred songs to quell earthquake victims' fears immediately after the disaster.[22] Priests used sermons to present arguments for and against the relocation and to promote moral reform. The K'iche''s (a Maya ethnic group in the Guatemalan Highlands) strong sense of their own history led them to rebel against the colonial government because they had interpreted the tremor as a sign that captain general was an Indian like them and that he had caused the disaster to restore Native Americans to a position of authority. Together with moving from Antigua Guatemala to New Guatemala,

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[20] Carta del 31 de agosto de 1773, dirigida por el Ayuntamiento a su Majestad, informándole de la ruina acaecida el 29 de julio y solicitando algunas providencias en favor del vecindario," in *Boletín del Archivo General del Gobierno* 8, no. 1 (March 1943): 161.
[21] AGI, Guatemala, 657.
[22] Carta de la Madre Abadesa de Capuchinas de Goathemala, Sor María Gertrudis de Yribe y Folgar, escrita a la Madre Abadesa de Capuchinas de Oaxaca (1773) in Luis Luján Muñoz, "Nueva información sobre los terremotos de 1773," *Anales de la Sociedad de Geografía e Historia* 50 (January-December 1977): 208-209.

the colonial government also made a strong effort to implement ideas about earthquake-resistant buildings to make the new capital a safer place in which to live. Officials, architects and artisans, and the poor saw their support for the creation of New Guatemala as an opportunity to petition to the Crown for various favors and for public relief so that they could make a better life for themselves.

Historiographical Debates on Earthquakes in Colonial Latin America

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Debates on natural catastrophe in colonial Latin America have emphasized the ability of calamity to ignite power struggles over competing

ideas about emergency management. However, in addition to an analysis of such disputes, this dissertation advances new understandings of the ways in which the earthquake gave victims chances to reshape their world. How did individuals' beliefs influence their attitudes toward the cataclysm? How did the effort to create a new city forge openings for survivors to refashion their identities?

This study shows that individual groups' notions of fear, hazard mitigation, history, and socioeconomics defined arguments about whether or not to move. It also demonstrates that the tragedy produced spaces in which officials, ecclesiastics, indigenous peoples, and the impoverished worked to improve their lives. In various ways, administrators and victims turned adversity into an opportunity to become disaster managers and survivors, respectively.

Despite the ability of 1773 earthquake to influence responses to disaster and to create socioeconomic opportunities in late eighteenth-century Guatemala, many historians have used this tremor as background information only. In making the earthquake the central character, this dissertation challenges studies that have failed to examine responses to the disaster fully. Miles Wortman argues, [the] disaster ignited passions of the citizenry, beginning a seven-year battle that revealed the depth of schisms in Guatemala." His overview does not

go beyond resistance to the relocation and does not examine economic, environmental, and socioeconomic arguments for or against it.[23] Wortman summarizes the K'iche' Indian revolt but does not analyze the way in which the K'iche''s sense of their history influenced their reaction to the catastrophe.[24] Catherine Lugar asserts that "[Juan Fermín de Aycinena] was among the leading merchants who pushed for transfer rand rebuilding of the capital after the earthquake in the 1770s, and used his millions to purchase the title of *marquesado* in 1781."[25] However, neither she nor Richmond Brown considers the way in which Aycinena and other merchants parlayed their socioeconomic support for the development of New Guatemala into noble titles.[26]

In addition to employing the catastrophe as a social or historical antecedent, scholars have not been able to move beyond the power struggle between Captain General Martín de Mayorga and Archbishop Pedro Cortés y Larraz. In analyzing the reactions of clerics, architects and artisans, and the poor to the catastrophe, this study deepens arguments that have concentrated exclusively on the controversy between the captain general and the archbishop.

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[23] Miles L. Wortman, *Government and Society in Central America, 1680-1840* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 158-161.
[24] Ibid., 182-183.
[25] Catherine Lugar, "Merchants," in *Cities & Society in Colonial Latin America*, ed. Louisa Schell Hoberman and Susan Migden Socolow (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986), 66.
[26] Richmond F. Brown, *Juan Fermín de Aycinena: Central American Colonial Entrepreneur, 1729-1796* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 181-184.

Pedro Pérez Valenzuela focuses on this conflict but fails to show how supporters and opponents' cultural, political, religious, scientific, and socioeconomic views shaped their responses to the earthquake.[27] He reproduces meaningful documents, such as the *audiencia's* plan for the new city of New Guatemala, but does not analyze them, leaving readers to extract their significance.[28] Cristina Zilbermann de Luján centers on elites because she believes that they alone have the ability to mobilize and to engage in conflict.[29] Zilbermann de Luján's analysis falls short in that she overlooks the capacity of non-elites to resist the relocation and of earthquake victims to petition for relief to rebuild their lives. Christophe Belaubre examines how the sociopolitical backgrounds of the captain general and the archbishop influenced their reactions to the tremor.[30] Despite helping readers to understand the origin and result of this conflict, Belaubre neglects urban reform and development in New Guatemala.

Scholars who have explored the move from Antigua Guatemala to New Guatemala have disregarded the colonial government's efforts to implement

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[27] Pedro Pérez Valenzuela, *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción: Terremoto de Santa Marta. Fundación en el Llano de la Virgen*, vol. 1 (Guatemala: Centro Editorial "José Pineda Ibarra," 1964), 107-146.
[28] Ibid., 170-218.
[29] Cristina Zilbermann de Luján reprints letters that nuns wrote in response to the earthquake in her appendix but, like Pérez Valenzuela, does not analyze them in her study. Cristina Zilbermann de Luján, *Aspectos socio-económicos del traslado de la ciudad de Guatemala (1773-1783)* (Guatemala: Academia de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala, 1987), 109.
[30] Christophe Belaubre, "El traslado de la capital del reino de Guatemala (1773-1779). Conflicto de poder y juegos sociales," *Revista Historia* no. 57-58 (January-December 2008): 23-27.

earthquake-resistant building techniques, architects' attempts at self-fashioning, and earthquake victims' work to petition for relief. In examining such issues, this dissertation challenges arguments that have neglected efforts by bureaucrats, ecclesiastics, and architects and artisans to promote ideas about anti-seismic architecture. It also questions studies that have discounted the attempts that earthquake victims made to obtain state aid. Inge Langenberg argues that late eighteenth-century New Guatemala experienced increased unemployment and crime rates and that officials failed to develop infrastructure in the new capital.[31] However, this dissertation asserts that applications for assistance demonstrate that earthquake survivors made sustained efforts to seek out help from the colonial administration to rebuild their lives. Alain Musset and Stephen Trobiner contend that administrators' decision to abandon Antigua Guatemala was the only anti-seismic strategy that they implemented in response to the disaster.[32] This study maintains that, in addition to the relocation, bureaucrats, clerics, and

[31] Inge Langenberg, "La estructura urbana y el cambio social en la ciudad de Guatemala a fines de la época colonial (1773-1824), in *La sociedad colonial en Guatemala: estudios regionales y locales*, ed. Stephen Webre (South Woodstock: Plumsock Mesoamerican Studies, 1989), 240-244.
[32] Alain Musset, "Mudarse o desaparecer. Traslado de ciudades hispanoamericanas y desastres (Siglos XVI-XVIII)," in *Historia y desastres en América Latina*, vol. 1, ed. Virginia García Acosta (Bogota: LA RED/CIESAS, 1996), 41. Stephen Tobriner, "Safety and Reconstruction of Noto after the Sicilian Earthquake of 1693 – The Eighteenth-Century Context," in *Dreadful Visitations: Confronting Natural Catastrophe in the Age of Enlightenment*, ed. Alessa Johns (New York: Routledge, 1999), 57.

architects emphasized the use of earthquake-resistant construction, education, and moral reform to make New Guatemala a safe place in which to live.

Recent historiographical debates on earthquakes in colonial Latin America emphasize new methodological and theoretical frameworks for the study of disaster. In using these new frameworks, this study affirms arguments about disaster response and recovery in colonial Latin America. Virginia García Acosta argues that vulnerability, differential vulnerability, recovery capacity building, and adaptive strategies are analytical tools with which scholars can explore the social aspects of catastrophe.[33] García Acosta asserts that social, economic, and religious responses include disaster response and long-term recovery such as self-help, relocation, voluntary and forced labor, petitions for labor exemptions, public prayer and religious processions, and earthquake-resistant building techniques. García Acosta maintains that archival sources such as city council minutes and documents concerning public works demonstrate that officials believed that they could make cities safer through prayer and earthquake-resistant buildings.[34]

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[33] Virginia García Acosta, "Respuestas y toma de decisiones ante la ocurrencia de sismos: Propuestas metodológicas y teóricas para el estudio histórico de los desastres," in *Los sismos en la historia de México: El análisis social*, ed. Virginia García Acosta, vol. 2 (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2001), 116-118.
[34] Ibid., 118-160.

Historical writing on earthquakes in colonial Spanish America stresses the ability of disaster to create spaces in which socioeconomic groups can reaffirm their points of view. This dissertation analyzes the efforts that bureaucrats, ecclesiastics, architects, and the rich and poor made to use the catastrophe to build opportunities to repair their city and their lives. In so doing, it affirms arguments about the capacity of earthquakes to create openings for disaster response and long-term recovery in colonial Spanish America. Jürgen Buchenau and Lyman Johnson argue that earthquakes, due to their destructiveness, "disrupt, if not dismantle, the social processes that organize and direct societies and cultures."[35] "The destructiveness of earthquakes also reveals existing social and economic fault lines, giving rise to new expressions of class conflict," they assert.[36] Charles Walker maintains that the 1746 earthquake-tsunami in Lima, Peru, presented a series of opportunities through which officials, clerics, and Indians and black people reasserted their beliefs. Elites publicly criticized administrators' efforts to rebuild Lima as a modern city, while Indians and blacks threatened to take advantage of the disaster to revolt. Nuns

[35] Jürgen Buchenau and Lyman L. Johnson, "Introduction: Earthquakes and Latin American Political Culture," in *Aftershocks: Earthquakes and Popular Politics in Latin America*, ed. Jürgen Buchenau and Lyman L. Johnson (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009), 4-5.
[36] Ibid., 11-12.

positioned themselves in places of authority through their premonitions about the destruction of Lima and efforts to locate meaning in the catastrophe.[37]

A Note on Sources

Early in my research, I made a conscious effort not to limit myself to a specific set of sources. The Benson Latin American Collection in Austin, Texas, has all six of the commission reports that Senior *Audiencia* Judge Juan González Bustillo published in 1774. They are a window into the ways in which the colonial government used arguments about the environment, history, and socioeconomics to support the relocation. In 2004, I made a preliminary research trip to the Archivo General de Centroamérica (AGCA) in Guatemala City, where Ana Carla Ericastilla, now the AGCA's director, encouraged me not to confine myself to documents under the heading *Traslación* (Relocation) and to look at *Actuaciones Civiles y Criminales* (Civil and Criminal Actions) for a fuller picture of the relocation's socioeconomic impact. In *Actuaciones Civiles y Criminales*, I located court cases such as a lawsuit between a slave and his master over a broken promise of freedom – a pledge that the owner had made to reward the slave for his loyalty during the earthquake.

[37] Charles F. Walker, *Shaky Colonialism: The 1746 Earthquake-Tsunami in Lima, Peru, and Its Long Aftermath* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 21-51, 90-105, and 156-185.

Subsequent research trips to archives and libraries at home and abroad yielded various kinds of archival and printed sources, many of which I use to give a fuller picture of responses to the disaster. By 2007, I had collected over 400 archival and printed sources from the AGCA, the Archivo General de Indias in Seville Spain, the Benson Latin American Collection, the Biblioteca César Brañas and the Biblioteca Nacional de Guatemala in Guatemala City, and the Yale University Library in New Haven, Connecticut. These records include applications for earthquake relief, census records, ceremonial descriptions, edicts, eulogies, eyewitness accounts, *gracias al sacar* petitions, guild regulations, legal opinions, minutes, newspaper articles, private letters, poems, *relaciones de méritos y servicios*, sermons, and songs. For example, I employ ceremonial descriptions, *gracias al sacar* petitions, and *relaciones de méritos y servicios* to show that officials, architects, merchants had made use of the earthquake as a chance for advancement. I use eyewitness accounts, private letters, and sermons to demonstrate how ecclesiastics availed themselves of the catastrophe to delve into the meanings of fear. The variety of documents that I analyze deepens our understanding of differing attitudes toward disaster response and recovery in late eighteenth-century Guatemala.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation consists of five chapters – each chapter deals with the ways in which specific groups (officials, ecclesiastics, indigenous peoples, architects and artisans, and the wealthy and the needy) responded to the earthquake. Chapter one focuses on disaster management in late eighteenth-century Latin America. It argues that the change of residence produced a political struggle among the Crown, the Church, city government, and people in Antigua Guatemala because they disagreed about its benefits. Chapter two explores the nature of belief in late eighteenth-century Guatemala. It asserts that nuns, priests, and the K'iche''s convictions influenced their reactions to the disaster. Chapter three concentrates on urban reform and development in New Guatemala in the late eighteenth century. It maintains that officials, clerics, builders, and merchants perceived the earthquake as an occasion to improve socioeconomic conditions in the new capital. Chapter four examines architects, artisans, and the construction of identity in late eighteenth-century Guatemala. It affirms that the disaster afforded architects chances for advancement but also put a strain on the Indian artisans whom the state had compelled to toil on the building of the new capital. Chapter five analyzes the efforts of the poor to remake themselves after the catastrophe through access to public relief, charity, and self-help. It advances

new understandings of disaster, poverty, and the survival strategies that the poor employed to reconstruct their lives.

Chapter One

The Politics of Catastrophe

To colonial officials' surprise, the archbishop, the city council, and thousands of residents passionately defended staying in Antigua Guatemala after the Spanish king approved its relocation in July 1775.[38] Two years earlier, a massive 7.5-magnitude earthquake[39] had destroyed the Guatemalan capital, leading bureaucrats to propose quitting the city. This suggestion sparked a controversy because over half of the population did not want to leave, citing strong socio-economic reasons. However, administrators' reports on the transmigration's benefits persuaded the monarch to agree to it. These narratives supported resettling the population in the Valley of Ermita because repairing damaged buildings was going to be prohibitively expensive. Also, religious and municipal authorities had attempted to transfer Antigua Guatemala to that part of the colony after shocks in 1717.[40] Despite economics and historical precedent, city dwellers defied the captain general's orders to claim free lots and public

[38] Pedro Pérez Valenzuela reproduced the order in volume 1 of *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción: Terremoto de Santa Marta. Fundación en el Llano de la Virgen*. Pedro Pérez Valenzuela, *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción: Terremoto de Santa Marta. Fundación en el Llano de la Virgen*, vol. 1 (Guatemala: Centro Editorial "José de Pineda Ibarra," 1964), 219-223.
[39] Randall A. White, Juan Pablo Ligorría, and Inés Lucía Cifuentes, "Seismic history of the Middle America subduction zone along El Salvador, Guatemala, and Chiapas, Mexico: 1526-2000," in *Natural Hazards in El Salvador*, ed. W. I. Rose, et al., (Boulder: Geological Society of America, 2004), 394.
[40] Ibid., 220.

relief, preferring to remain among the ruins. They ignored proclamations that Captain General Martín de Mayorga published in December 1775, driving him to threaten charging for property.[41] Nevertheless, there were still 11,000 people in Antigua Guatemala in 1778, meaning that a significant number of the former capital's inhabitants continued seeing 250-year-old city as their homeland.[42]

This chapter focuses on disaster management in late eighteenth-century Latin America. It argues that the change of residence produced a political struggle among the Crown, the Church, city government, and people in Antigua Guatemala because they disagreed about its benefits. Debates on colonial science in Spanish America have emphasized colonial bishops, bureaucrats, landowners, and merchants' role in studying the colonies' natural resources to promote the Spanish empire's economic development.[43] Although these discussions of issues have also stressed the part that Africans, Asians, and Native Americans played

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[41] Pérez Valenzuela also reprinted these notifications in volume 1 of *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*. Ibid, 229-231 and 234.

[42] "Noticias del Reyno de Guatemala 1778," *Anales de la Academia de Geografía e Historia* 56, no. 54 (1990): 248.

[43] Susan Deans-Smith, "Nature and Scientific Knowledge in the Spanish Empire: Introduction," *Colonial Latin American Review* 15, no. 1 (June 2006): 30-31. Emily Kay Berquist, "The Science of Empire: Bishop Martínez Compañón and the Enlightenment in Peru," PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2007, 4-8. Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, "Introduction," in *Science in the Spanish and Portuguese Empires, 1500-1800*, ed. Daniela Bleichmar, et al. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 1-5.

in supporting these projects,[44] there is still much we do not know about cooperation and resistance to them. In post-earthquake Guatemala, functionaries saw the Antigua Guatemala's destruction as an opportunity to learn about the colony's environment and resources and shift the capital's location to improve socio-economic conditions.[45] This decision provoked arguments[46] and created opportunities[47] that raise new questions about the politics of catastrophe. How did leaving the ruined city shape disputes over economics, history, nature, politics, religion, and risk reduction? How did the former capital's abandonment

[44] Cañizares-Esguerra, "Introduction," in *Science in the Spanish and Portuguese Empires, 1500-1800*, 1-5.

[45] Studies on science in late eighteenth-century Guatemala have focused on a botanical expedition that Charles IV sent to Guatemala between 1795 and 1803. Debates center on economic botany and Guatemalans' contributions to the expedition. Arturo Taracena Arriola, *La expedición científica al Reino de Guatemala* (Guatemala: Editorial Universitaria de Guatemala, 1983). J. Luís Maldonado Polo, *La huellas de la razón: La expedición científica de Centroamérica (1795-1803)* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2001).

[46] Recent scholarship on Antigua Guatemala's relocation has delved into the captain general and archbishop's personalities and personal motives for supporting or opposing the migration. However, this literature pays scant attention to the scientific commission that the colonial government created to study the move or the commissioners' backgrounds and contributions. Christophe Belaubre, "El traslado de la capital del reino de Guatemala (1773-1779). Conflicto de poder y juegos sociales," *Revista Historia* no. 57-58 (January-December 2008).

[47] This chapter builds on a body of literature about bureaucrats in colonial Spanish America that has emphasized politics of colonial careers, self-promotion and the *relaciones de méritos y servicios*, and the economy of favor. Mark A. Burkholder, *Politics of a Colonial Career: José Baquíjano and the Audiencia of Lima*, 2nd ed. (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1990). Murdo J. Macleod, "Self-Promotion: The Relaciones de Méritos y Servicios and Their Historical and Political Interpretation," *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 7, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 25-42. Alejandro Cañeque, *The King's Living Image: The Culture and Politics of Viceregal Power in Colonial Mexico* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 157-184.

influence late eighteenth-century risk management and advancement opportunities for bureaucrats?

This chapter is organized into three sections. The first part discusses response, recovery, and calamity in late-eighteenth century Guatemala. It focuses on bureaucrats' consideration of socio-economic issues to promote the relocation. The second segment addresses disaster management and opportunity and shows that officials' ability to control the catastrophe successfully gave them chances for political advancement. The third portion deals with resistance to the relocation. It looks at the archbishop, the city council, and residents' arguments against moving and the public protests that they staged. It also considers the state's reaction to opposition.

Response, Recovery, and Calamity in Late Eighteenth-Century Guatemala

Officials' actions immediately after the earthquake centered on risk mitigation through praying, saving lives, protecting property, and feeding the living and burying the dead. In a report on the tremors, Senior *Audiencia* Minister Juan González Bustillo emphasized that the captain general and all of the high court judges had led earthquake victims in prayer to assist them in recovering

spiritually.[48] Colonial officials attached importance to appealing to God's mercy because everyone believed that He had caused the cataclysm to punish them for sinning.[49] Consequently, during the catastrophe, survivors asked heaven and each other for forgiveness.[50] After escaping from the crumbling palace with only his life, Captain General Mayorga, the *audiencia*, and the city council rescued survivors that the earthquake had trapped inside ruined buildings and distributed militiamen throughout the ruined city to protect lives and safeguard property.[51] Fear of heightened violence and looting increased immediately after the calamity because 400 prisoners had escaped from jail.[52] There was also heavy concern to feed the living. To this end, the captain general repaired roads, mills, and ovens and extracted wheat, corn, and vegetables from the wreckage.[53] The state and Church also made a mutual effort to count and bury the dead to give them proper Christian burials and contain disease.[54]

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[48] González Bustillo, *Extracto, ô relación methodica, y puntual de los autos de reconocimiento, practicado en virtud de commission del señor presidente de la real audiencia de este reino de Guatemala*, 15. García Acosta has argued that Catholics in colonial Latin America believed in prayers' power to reduce natural hazards' impact on society. García Acosta, "Respuestas y toma de decisiones ante la ocurrencia de sismos: Propuestas metodológicas y teóricas para el estudio histórico de los desastres, 135-155.

[49] González Bustillo, *Extracto, ô relación methodica, y puntual de los autos de reconocimiento, practicado en virtud de commission del señor presidente de la real audiencia de este reino de Guatemala*, 13.

[50] Ibid., 14.

[51] Ibid., 15 and 18.

[52] Ibid., 15.

[53] Ibid., 19.

[54] Ibid., 21.

Although it had put an emergency response system in place, the colonial government insisted that the high cost of repairing the damaged city made moving imperative.[55] On August 4th, bureaucrats invited the archbishop, the cathedral chapter, the city council, and the male religious orders to attend a "General Meeting" about the capital's future. At this gathering, City Architect Bernardo Ramírez declared that the city was "totally ruined."[56] Two weeks later, engineer Antonio Marín, building expert Friar Francisco Gutiérrez, and master mason Francisco Javier Gálvez concurred with Ramírez after having surveyed the destruction.[57] Gutierrez and Gálvez argued that reconstructing devastated edifices and introducing earthquake-resistant building techniques was going to cost 7,000 pesos per city block.[58] Thereupon, only one city council member and Father Pedro Martínez de Molina voted against moving.[59] However, leaders could not settle on a location of the new city. Archbishop Pedro Cortés y Larraz proposed the Valley of Jalapa, while everyone else chose wanted the Valley of La Ermita.[60]

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[55] Musset has argued that relocation was the only viable alternative that officials in colonial Latin America had to prevent earthquake-ravaged cities from disappearing. Musset, "Mudarse o desaparecer: Traslado de ciudades hispanoamericanas y desastres (Siglos XVI-XVIII)," 41-70.
[56] Ibid., 26.
[57] Ibid., 28-30.
[58] Ibid., 29-30.
[59] Ibid., 26-27.
[60] Ibid., 27.

In response to the projected migration, the colonial administration marshaled bureaucratic resources through the creation of a scientific commission to explore and recommend a site for the new city.[61] However, this was not the first time that the royal authorities in Guatemala had organized a committee to study earthquakes. After shocks destroyed the capital in 1717, City Councilman Juan de Ruballo Morante had interviewed eyewitnesses, measured the distance between the city and the nearby Agua and Fuego Volcanoes, and surveyed the devastation.[62] The delegation that the state formed in response to the tremors of 1773 consisted of *audiencia*, Church, and city council representatives. The captain general selected Senior High Court Magistrate Juan González Bustillo to head the deputation.[63] González Bustillo was the ideal candidate to lead the commissioners. He had resided in Guatemala since 1757, had served as interim captain general from 1771-1773,[64] and had assisted in disaster response and

[61] Historians have tended to focus on scientific expeditions' emphasis on economic botany. Arthur R. Steele, *Flores para el Rey: La expedición de Ruiz y Pavón y la Flora del Perú (1777-1788)*, trans. Antonio M. Regueiro (Barcelona: Ediciones de Serbal), 1982, 7-10. Daniela Bleichmar, "A Visible and Useful Empire: Visual Culture and Colonial Natural History in the Eighteenth-Century Spanish World," in *Science in the Spanish and Portuguese Empires, 1500-1800*, ed. Daniela Bleichmar, et al., 290-293.
[62] Ibid., 1-2.
[63] Ibid., 28.
[64] Mark A. Burkholder and D. S. Chandler, *Biographical Dictionary of Audiencia Ministers in the Americas, 1687-1821* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1982), 143.

recovery efforts after floods in 1749 and 1762 and earthquakes in 1751 and 1765.[65] The City Council's agent, merchant Francisco Ignacio Chamorro, had been justice of the peace of San Salvador between 1759 and 1761 and as city councilman since 1767.[66] Both men had valuable disaster management experience, whereas Captain General Mayorga had arrived in Antigua Guatemala only two months prior to the catastrophe and did not have a background in catastrophe recovery.[67] Nevertheless, Mayorga did have forty years of military training and had governed the Spanish municipality of Alcántara prior to his appointment as captain general of Guatemala.[68]

Despite having relied on existing legislation regarding the establishment of cities in colonial Latin America, the colonial government supplied the scientific expedition with questions about volcanoes and earthquakes to help with the investigation. On September 3, 1773, the captain general informed the archbishop that, "in accordance with the city's temporary relocation to La

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[65] González Bustillo, *Extracto, ô relación methodica, y puntual de los autos de reconocimiento, practicado en virtud de commission del señor presidente de la real audiencia de este reino de Guatemala*, 10-11.
[66] José Manuel Santos Pérez, *Élites, poder local y régimen colonial: El cabildo y los regidores de Santiago de Guatemala, 1700-1787* (South Woodstock: Plumsock Mesoamerican Studies, 1999), 329 and 360-361.
[67] González Bustillo, *Extracto, ô relación methodica, y puntual de los autos de reconocimiento, practicado en virtud de commission del señor presidente de la real audiencia de este reino de Guatemala*, 11.
[68] José Antonio Calderón Quijano, *Los virreyes de Nueva España en el reinado de Carlos III*, vol. 3 (Seville: Escuela Gráfica Salesiana, 1967), 27.

Ermita," he was moving there in three days.[69] Likewise, High Court Justice Manuel Fernández de Villanueva had arrived in La Ermita on September 7th "where, with backbreaking work, he had built a thatched cottage" for himself and his wife, he reported to his cousin in a letter.[70] Despite the colonial government's departure, the commissioners set out to explore Jalapa on August 19th, taking with them a list of fifteen questions to help them in their research.[71] The captain general, the *audiencia*, the archbishop, and the city council finalized the questionnaire a week prior to the explorers' departure for the Jalapa.[72] Administrators based the survey on the *Nuevas Ordenanzas de Descubrimiento y Población* from 1573.[73]

Reliance on the *Nuevas Ordenanzas*, historian Francisco de Solano has emphasized, was not extraordinary. These ordinances were part of the *Recopilación de leyes de los Reinos de Indias* from 1680, and Spain enforced them until 1820.[74] In compliance with these laws, the bureaucracy ordered the

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[69] Pérez Valenzuela copied this letter in volume 1 of his *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*. Pérez Valenzuela, *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción,* vol. 1, 87-88.
[70] "Copia de carta de mi primo Dn. Manuel Fernández de Villanueva y Armiño, oydor de la Real Audiencia," 1773, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University, New Haven, CT.
[71] Volume 1 of Pérez Valuenzuela's *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción* contains the entire questionnaire. Pérez Valenzuela, *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, vol. 1, 107-112.
[72] Ibid., 112.
[73] Francisco de Solano, *Ciudades hispanoamericanas y pueblos de indios* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1990), 59-80.
[74] Ibid., 62.

expedition to compile information about the valleys' climate, population, and natural resources.[75] What is less ordinary and more innovative about the Guatemalan poll from 1773 is that leaders also instructed the delegation to research volcanic and seismic activity in Jalapa and La Ermita.[76]

The commissioners observed that La Ermita's natural environment had the potential to stimulate the new capital's growth. After a year of study, the explorers concluded that La Ermita was the more advantageous site for the new city's socio-economic development than either Jalapa or Antigua Guatemala. For example, La Ermita's climate was better – the explorers argued that its inhabitants lived longer and appeared healthier.[77] Scientists at the University of San Carlos in the ruined city also concluded that its water was more beneficial after testing samples that the commissioners had collected.[78] Engineers and architects who assisted the delegation had determined that the "ground was solid" and that there was ample wood to facilitate construction.[79] Finally, builders also argued that the area did not experience strong tremors after

[75] Pérez Valenzuela, *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, vol. 1, 107-112.
[76] Ibid, 111-112.
[77] González Bustillo, *Extracto, ô relación methodica, y puntual de los autos de reconocimiento, practicado en virtud de commission del señor presidente de la real audiencia de este reino de Guatemala*, 44-45.
[78] Ibid., 48-49.
[79] Ibid., 56-57.

judging the minimal damage that the earthquake of 1773 had caused to La Ermita's buildings.[80]

Three additional disasters that occurred in Antigua Guatemala between 1773 and 1775 persuaded the colonial government that it had made the right decision in leaving. According to City Architect Bernardo Ramírez, the powerful seismic episode that took place on December 13, 1773, just three months after the tremors felt in July of that year, razed Antigua Guatemala's few surviving structures. The cathedral and the "solid and new" Jesuit church were among them.[81] This second main movement of the earth led to a typhus epidemic in the destroyed capital. Captain General Mayorga blamed the contagion, which killed 4,000 people in the ruined city in only six months,[82] on the convulsion of the earth in 1773 and on the return of infected refugees to Antigua Guatemala.[83] The Pacaya Volcano's eruption on July 1, 1775 reinforced the captain general's position on the transfer's advantageousness. To support this argument, the colonial government sponsored a study showing that the one-month eruption

[80] Ibid., 51-52.
[81] Ibid., 32.
[82] Carlos Martínez Durán, *Las ciencias médicas en Guatemala: Origen y evolución*, 3rd ed. (Guatemala: Editorial Universitaria, 1964), 308.
[83] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 1801, Exp. 1,1806.

had covered Antigua Guatemala in ash, endangering inhabitants' health, while La Ermita had emerged unscathed.[84]

In addition to current calamities, the colonial administration stressed the importance of Antigua Guatemala's past cataclysms and relocation attempts in determining its future. The commission reports contained a comprehensive catalogue[85] of every serious disaster that had happened in the Guatemalan capital between 1524 and 1773.[86] The accounts' author, Juan González Bustillo, calculated that the city had experienced seventeen severe tremors, which destroyed it eleven times, in 250 years.[87] Earthquakes were not the only tragedies that threatened this urban center's survival either. It had also suffered devastating mudslides, volcanic eruptions, and floods.[88] Consequently, leaders resettled the population after the 1541 mudslide and made an unsuccessful

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[84] AGI, Guatemala, 450.

[85] Randall A. White, Juan Pablo Ligorría, and Inés Lucía Cifuentes have contended that "One of the first catalogs of earthquakes was compiled by Bustillo (1774) in a report on the disastrous earthquakes of 1773 that caused widespread damage and prompted the relocation of the capital from Antigua to Guatemala City." White, Ligorría, and Cifuentes, "Seismic history of the Middle America subduction zone along El Salvador, Guatemala, and Chiapas, Mexico: 1526-2000," 381.

[86] González Bustillo, *Extracto, ô relación methodica, y puntual de los autos de reconocimiento, practicado en virtud de commission del señor presidente de la real audiencia de este reino de Guatemala*, 6-10. Juan González Bustillo, *Razón puntual de los sucesos mas memorables, y de los estragos, y daños que ha padecido la ciudad de Guatemala, y su vecindario, desde que se fundó en el parage llamado Ciudad Vieja, o Almolonga, y de donde se traslado a el en que actualmente se halla* (Mixco: Antonio Sánchez Cubillas, 1774).

[87] González Bustillo, *Extracto, ô relación methodica, y puntual de los autos de reconocimiento, practicado en virtud de commission del señor presidente de la real audiencia de este reino de Guatemala*, 10.

[88] Ibid., 6-10.

attempt to do so again in response to the earth's shaking in 1717.[89] This catastrophe caused half a million pesos in damages and motivated the Church and city council to ask the captain general for permission to leave the ruined city.[90]

Old prophecies also shaped new arguments supporting the migration. In 1774, High Court Judge Manuel Fernández de Villanueva used a revelation to support his legal opinion advocating La Ermita for the new city's establishment. Fernández de Villanueva had concluded that the present misfortune was "the fulfillment of a certain prophetic vision" dating back to 1717. Prior to the tremors that transpired that year, Sister Juana de Acuña had prophesied Antigua Guatemala's "total ruin," except for the Chapel of Our Lady of Mercy in the Church of La Merced, and that angels had foretold that the new capital would take the name "City of the Virgin." Fernández de Villanueva argued that Sister Juana's prediction had come true when the 1773 earthquake wiped out the Guatemalan capital, leaving the Chapel of the Virgin of Mercy intact. He also maintained that the selection of the Valley of La Ermita, which was also known as the Valley of La Virgen, as the new city's location had fulfilled the second part of the vision. Miracles aside, Fernández de Villanueva argued in favor of moving

[89] Ibid., 6 and 10.
[90] Ibid., 9-10.

to La Ermita because it had abundant natural resources and experienced fewer catastrophic earthquakes.[91]

Disaster Management and Opportunity

Transforming La Ermita into New Guatemala[92] placed greater emphasis on long-term recovery, created extra work for *audiencia* ministers, but allowed them to gain valuable risk mitigation experience. Manuel Arredondo and Eusebio Beleña could never have imagined what was in store for them when Charles III appointed them *audiencia* ministers of Guatemala in September 1773.[93] Arredondo was a lawyer who traveled directly from Spain in 1774, and, by 1776, was senior high court judge of Guatemala. Although Arredondo did not have a background in catastrophe recovery, his position on the *audiencia* required him to assume a leadership position during the reconstruction. He oversaw the creation of the captain general's palace and the city council building between 1776 and 1779. He was also in charge of water supply and the distribution of lots.[94] Eusebio Beleña, Arrendondo's colleague, managed the building of the tobacco monopoly office, San Juan de Dios Hospital, and numerous churches and

[91] "Fundamentos que tubo el oidor Dn. Eusebio Bentura Belén para el voto consultivo . . .," Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.
[92] Charles III christened the new city New Guatemala on May 23, 1776. Pérez Valenzuela, *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, vol. 2, 287.
[93] Burkholder and Chandler, *Biographical Dictionary of Audiencia Ministers in the Americas, 1687-1821*, 26-27 and 41-42.
[94] Ibid., 26-27.

convents.[95] His responsibilities also included supplying building materials. Unlike Arredondo, Beleña was well acquainted with a colonial bureaucrat's work, having served as an official in Mexico in the late 1760s.[96]

Audiencia ministers who had familiarity with reconstructing other colonial Latin American cities that tremors had razed used this awareness to benefit New Guatemala's construction. José de Cistué was the Crown attorney for the *Audiencia* of Guatemala between 1773 and 1775. Prior to coming to Guatemala, Cistué held the same position in the court of Quito for fifteen years. Shortly before Cistué's arrival in Quito in 1758, tremors had demolished the city. The new *fiscal* spent his time learning about response, recovery, and calamity in Lima and Lisbon after disasters devastated these urban centers. During the two years that Cistué worked in Guatemala, he created a plan for the new city of New Guatemala based on his observations of the Peruvian and Portuguese capitals' reconstruction. Cistué's recommendations included using earthquake-resistant building techniques and promoting health and economic development in the new city.[97] Likewise, *audiencia* ministers who had spent several years in post-earthquake Guatemala became seasoned disaster recovery managers able to take

[95] Ibid., 41-42.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid., 88-89.

their experience elsewhere in colonial Latin America. Senior *Audiencia* judge Manuel Arredondo was one such official. By the time Arredondo left New Guatemala to go to the court of Lima in 1779, he had spent the previous five years overseeing the new city's growth.[98]

Despite the *audiencia* ministers' determination, they could not meet the migration's increased demands alone, and, in response, the colonial government expanded the bureaucracy through the creation of new administrative positions to facilitate it. Once Charles III had approved the relocation and the city council had moved to New Guatemala, officials named Fernando del Sobral Antigua Guatemala's justice of the peace. Sobral's main responsibilities were administering justice to the thousands of people who had defied the state and remained in former capital. The state also entrusted Sobral with overseeing Indian labor drafts for the new city's construction.[99] Officials were even more concerned with "allocating lots, sewage, creating streets" in the new capital. To meet these needs, they appointed Manuel Galisteo the relocation's accountant and Francisco Geraldino its materials distributor in 1776.[100] Recognizing that

[98] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 31,233.
[99] Nombramiento de Justicia Mayor a Don Fernando del Sobral del Suelo y Sitio de la Arruinada Ciudad de Guatemala in Manuel Rubio, *Monografía de la Ciudad de Antigua Guatemala* (Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional, 1989), 349-353.
[100] AGCA, Sig. A3, Leg. 812, Exp. 14,914.

these men had a lot of work ahead of them, functionaries assigned each a clerk.[101] The colonial government also gave each *audiencia* judge a secretary because they were in charge of numerous projects and needed help keeping records orderly. The high court justices' desire to regulate the move motivated them to propose that the captain general designate a single notary, "devoted mainly to his office," to deal with "relocation matters."[102]

High- and low-ranking officials' contributions did not go unnoticed by the Crown, which promoted numerous bureaucrats to reward their service, set an example, and benefit from their experience. In 1776, Charles III made Captain General Mayorga field marshal (highest ranking army officer) in the Spanish army. For Mayorga, a career military officer, attaining five-star general standing was the culmination of forty years in the armed forces. The Spanish king rewarded the captain general because he had heard of his "perseverance and resourcefulness" in the disaster's aftermath and had been pleased with Mayorga's decision to move.[103] Over the next three years, the captain general continued proving himself through his work on long-term recovery in post-earthquake Guatemala. When the Mexican viceroy died in 1779, the sovereign

[101] Ibid..
[102] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 59, Exp. 1,583.
[103] AGI, Guatemala, 450.

made Mayorga viceroy of New Spain, where he used his catastrophe management experience from Guatemala to assist in recovery after a smallpox epidemic.[104]

Between 1775 and 1802, the imperial government elevated six *audiencia* ministers to the *Audiencia* of Mexico and two to the court of Lima to reward their work on the migration, while exporting highly experienced and committed officials to the two most important colonial cities Spanish America.[105] Juan González Bustillo, the director of the commission that had recommended moving to La Ermita in 1774, advanced to the *Audiencia* of Mexico in 1775.[106] His successor as senior high court judge, Manuel Arredondo, eventually joined the court of Lima in 1779, having led New Guatemala's construction for the previous five years.[107] Low-ranking colonial officials also climbed the bureaucratic ladder after having facilitated the transmigration. After two years as New Guatemala's materials distributor, Charles III appointed Francisco Geraldino justice of the peace of Totonicapán in the Guatemalan Highlands in 1778.[108] In his new position, the former materials distributor, who had formerly overseen one

[104] Calderón Quijano, *Los virreyes de Nueva España en el reinado de Carlos III*, vol. 3, 31-33.
[105] Burkholder and Chandler, *Biographical Dictionary of Audiencia Ministers in the Americas, 1687-1821*, 26-27, 41-42, 88-89, 143, 267-269, 290-291, and 305.
[106] Ibid., 143.
[107] Ibid., 26-27.
[108] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 63, Exp. 4,494.

employee, was now responsible for administering justice to thousands of people in Totonicapán.[109]

When asking for remuneration for work on the relocation, colonial officials expressed awareness of the value of their contributions and those of others to disaster response and recovery. In 1774, Captain General Mayorga and his wife, Josepha Valcarcel, appealed to Charles III public relief. Josepha, who was back in Spain, emphasized that her husband had lost everything he had, including his furniture and baggage, during the earthquake. For his part, Mayorga also complained bitterly to Secretary of State Friar Julián de Arriaga in Madrid that he had spent a considerable sum on his journey but had not received his salary in three years. After the tremors, he had to purchase housing for himself and his "family," which consisted of a secretary, two pages, and a valet. The voyage had put Mayorga in debt, and now he begged Arriaga to persuade the king to help him get back on his feet and "continue serving the Crown."[110]

The Guatemalan high court justices were explicit about what they wanted in recognition of the additional duties that they had taken on when they asked the Crown for raises because "their work increased daily as a result of the

[109] Pedro Cortés y Larraz, *Descripción geográfico-moral de la Diócesis de Goathemala*, vol. 2 (Guatemala: Academia de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala, 1958), 301.
[110] AGI, Guatemala, 450.

capital's destruction" in 1775.[111] On occasion, colonial officials requested compensation for those who had responded to the disaster immediately. Farmer Juan de Carranza supplied wheat to fill a food shortage in the devastated capital shortly after the tremors; in gratitude, the city council wrote to the king asking him to reward Carranza for his help.[112]

The political importance that the Crown placed on the migration shaped the colonial administration's priorities and its perception of high-ranking colonial officials who had become successful disaster managers. In 1779, the imperial government gave Captain General Matías de Gálvez[113] instructions for governing post-earthquake Guatemala. These orders discussed the relocation's significance to the Spanish monarchy and Gálvez's role in it. The move had been the king's way of helping colonial subjects in the ravaged city to recover from the shock, but it remained incomplete. Charles III entrusted Gálvez with making thousands of stragglers that had remained in Antigua Guatemala emigrate to New Guatemala. However, the monarch advised the new captain general to act

[111] "Petition to the Crown," 1775, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University, New Haven, CT.
[112] "El Ayuntamiento informa a su Majestad de los servicios contraídos por don Juan de Carranza, que abasteció a la ciudad durante la escasez de trigo.–30 de Octubre de 1773," in *Boletín del Archivo General del Gobierno* 8, no. 1 (March 1943): 164.
[113] Gálvez succeeded Mayorga as captain general of Guatemala in 1779 and ruled until 1784.

prudently because the change of residence was going to cause residents "annoyances that were absolutely necessary."[114]

Five years later, Charles III made Gálvez viceroy of New Spain to reward his work in New Guatemala. Viceregal officials in Mexico City greeted the new viceroy's arrival with a triumphal arch that celebrated his past accomplishments, including those in Guatemala. The viceregal administration honored Gálvez's contributions to long-term recovery in post-earthquake Guatemala with a painting depicting Antigua Guatemala's abandoned and crumbling buildings and the aqueduct that Gálvez had commissioned architects to build in New Guatemala.[115] The picture thus juxtaposed life and death and characterized the new viceroy as an effectual disaster manager.

Colonial officials in Guatemala shared this vision; after Gálvez's death, they erected a temporary mausoleum in New Guatemala with images of the former captain general's accomplishments. One artwork echoed the sentiments that Mexico City bureaucrats had expressed the previous year. It showed Gálvez

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[114] "Instrucciones de Gobierno a D. Matías de Gálvez, electo Presidente, Gobernador y Capitán General del Reino de Guatemala," *Anales de la Academia de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala* 10, no. 1-4 (1957): 136-138

[115] Joaquín Velázquez de León, *La estirpe vespasiana. Idea alegorica de las pinturas y aparatos festivos del arco triunfal que para la entrada publica y solemne del Exmo. Señor Don Matias de Galvez, Garcia, Madrid y Cabrera, Teniente General de los Reales Exércitos, Virrey, Gobernador y Capitan General de esta N. E. y Presidente de su Real Audiencia &c. Erigió la Nobilisima Imperial Ciudad de Mexico el dia 8 de Febrero de 1784* (Mexico: Felipe de Zúñiga y Ontiveros, 1784).

giving orders to builders in charge of introducing water into the new capital and represented officials' idea of a tireless leader who had earned the respect of those whom he had governed through his hazard mitigation work.[116] Although Gálvez's dedication to long-term recovery inspired other colonial officials, the relocation did not go smoothly.

Resistance to the Relocation

Despite having initially agreed to the relocation, the city council and the archbishop eventually altered their decision a month after the disaster. The city councilmen resisted moving until 1775, when the king issued a decree ordering them to do so.[117] Archbishop Pedro Cortés y Larraz refused to abandon Antigua Guatemala until Charles III expelled him from the colony in 1778.[118] The opposition explained its change of mind in historical, political, religious, and socio-economic terms. The city council and archbishop's change of heart happened suddenly. On August 30th, the city councilmen wrote to Charles III explaining that, although they had agreed to relocate temporarily, they could no

[116] Bernardo Madrid, *Descripción de las honras que en el dia 5 de febrero de este presente año de 1785 se dedicaron a la memoria del Exmo. Señor D. Mathias de Gálvez* (Nueva Guatemala: Antonio Sánchez Cubillas, 1785).
[117] "Don Martín de Mayorga, Presidente de la Real Audiencia, Gobernador y Capitán General ordena al Ayuntamiento su pronta traslación al nuevo establecimiento," in Manuel Rubio Sánchez, *Monografía de la ciudad de Antigua Guatemala*, vol. 1, 341-347.
[118] Pérez Valenzuela printed the edict in vol. 2 of *La Nueva Guatemala*. Pérez Valenzuela, *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, vol. 2, 465-470.

longer do so. They argued that refugees had returned the city and that they felt politically obligated to remain in the destroyed capital to watch over their well-being.[119]

In addition, Archbishop Cortés y Larraz had a profound change of outlook on the migration. On October 1st, *Audiencia* Judge Manuel Fernández de Villanueva criticized the archbishop for having altered his decision. He argued that Cortés y Larraz's behavior was absurd because the colonial government's intention was to reestablish the city somewhere that did not experience earthquakes.[120]

The relocation's critics argued that the colonial government had proceeded with the migration without having taken their political views into consideration. The captain general and the *audiencia* shocked the city council and the archbishop when they emigrated to La Ermita a month after the tremors, causing a leadership crisis. The new captain general had arrived in Antigua Guatemala in June, and the earthquake had occurred in July. A week after the

[119] "Carta del 31 de agosto de 1773, dirigida por el Ayuntamiento a su Majestad, informándole de la ruina acaecida el 29 de julio y solicitando algunas providencias en favor del vecindario," *Boletín del Archivo General del Gobierno*, 8, no. 1 (March 1943): 161-162.
[120] Manuel Fernández de Villanueva y Armiño, "Copia de carta de mi primo Dn. Manuel Fernández de Villanueva y Armiño, oydor de la Real Audiencia," Central America Collection, Box 2, Folder 13, Yale University Library, Central America Collection, New Haven, CT.

disaster, Captain General Mayorga had proposed the relocation, and he and the high court abandoned the ruined city a month later.

The city councilmen and Archbishop Cortés y Larraz contended that Mayorga and the *audiencia's* sudden departure showed disregard for residents' resilience. By 1773, the capital was 250 years old and had experienced numerous earthquakes. Nevertheless, the city's inhabitants had adapted to the environment, rebuilding the capital many times. On the eve of earthquake, Antigua Guatemala had thirty three churches, eight convents, several Church- and state-owned buildings, and 8,000 homes. In addition, the population had learned to deal with tremors. As a safety precaution, most houses were one-story tall and streets were wide.[121] The archbishop maintained that he and the nuns would not relocate until the colonial government had completed the move.[122] On August 12th, he had requested 8,000 pesos from officials to pay for the Church's move. However, two weeks later, he had decided not to resettle after all. Archbishop Cortés y Larraz's change of mind infuriated colonial administrators, who complained about him to the imperial government. The captain general and *audiencia* accused the archbishop of setting a bad example to residents through

[121] "Carta del 31 de agosto de 1773, dirigida por el Ayuntamiento a su Majestad, informándole de la ruina acaecida el 29 de julio y solicitando algunas providencias en favor del vecindario," *Boletín del Archivo General del Gobierno*, 8, no. 1 (March 1943): 153.
[122] AGI, Guatemala, 461.

his political opposition. They also charged him with undermining the move because they could not count on his cooperation and political support.[123]

Despite these accusations, Cortés y Larraz had political reasons for altering his attitude on the resettlement. As archbishop of Guatemala and bishop of Antigua Guatemala, Cortés y Larraz felt a strong sense of political obligation to his diocesans in the capital. In 1768, he had written a pastoral letter advising priests not to leave their parishes for more than three days at a time without his permission.[124] Also, unlike the captain general, the archbishop had lived in the city for five years prior to the earthquake. He had grown attached to the "very beautiful" city in the time that he spent there leading up to the disaster.[125] In a series of letters to the king, the archbishop explained that political responsibility required him to remain in the ruined city. In 1774, he argued that numerous refugees, many of them poor, had returned to the destroyed capital.[126] Also, he contended that, as the highest ranking bishop in the archdiocese of Guatemala, it was his political duty to stay in Antigua Guatemala and protect colonial subjects, like the poor and the nuns, whom the Crown had entrusted to him. He feared

[123] Ibid.
[124] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 4043, Exp. 31,206.
[125] Cortés y Larraz, *Descripción geográfico-moral de la diócesis de Goathemala*, vol. 1, 22.
[126] AGI, Guatemala, 657.

that, if he deserted the nuns, whom he referred to as "consecrated virgins," he would expose them to acts of disrespect.[127]

Unlike the archbishop, the city councilmen relocated to New Guatemala in 1776 but, like him, continued perceiving the captain general's attitude toward them as an act of political tyranny. The city council remained in Antigua Guatemala until the king ordered them to move in December 1775. The city council members obeyed Charles III, moving to the new capital the following month. However, after arriving in New Guatemala in January 1776, the municipal authorities learned that Captain General Mayorga was not going to allow them to leave.[128] In a letter to the Spanish monarchy, the city government accused Mayorga of being a despotic political leader. It argued that the colonial government was going to take at least six years to complete the migration and that the captain general's insistence that city council members stay violated their rights as the Spain king's vassals. The city councilmen also contended that the colonial government did not have the right to keep them away from their families and their businesses.[129]

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[127] Ibid.
[128] Pérez Valenzuela, *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, vol. 2, 257-264.
[129] Ibid.

In addition to political arguments, the relocation's critics gave socio-economic reasons against moving. In 1774, the captain general asked the archbishop for a report on Church finances because he had hoped to use this money to pay to move religious institutions.[130] In response, Archbishop Cortés y Larraz argued that the earthquake had destroyed all of the Church's assets.[131] The city council estimated that the Church had lost 6,000,000 pesos in real estate in the disaster.[132] Cortés y Larraz contended that the Church had a religious obligation to use its remaining funds to defray the expenses of public worship.[133]

Also, the archbishop was an advocate for Antigua Guatemala's poor. In a series of letters, he asked the colonial and imperial governments how they could expect the impoverished to go to New Guatemala. Moving cost more than the value of these people's few belongings, he argued.[134] Some destitute residents declared that they could not afford to pay the costs associated with moving. Nicolás Letona insisted that he did not have the means for relocating his very large family, which consisted of forty relatives.[135] Likewise, the city councilmen

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[130] AGI, Guatemala, 657.
[131] Ibid.
[132] "Carta del 31 de agosto de 1773, dirigida por el Ayuntamiento a su Majestad, informándole de la ruina acaecida el 29 de julio y solicitando algunas providencias en favor del vecindario," *Boletín del Archivo General del Gobierno*, 8, no. 1 (March 1943): 157.
[133] AGI, Guatemala, 657.
[134] Ibid.
[135] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 57, Exp. 1560.

criticized New Guatemala's inadequacy, alleging that its lack of adequate housing and schooling made it a horrible place to live.[136]

Opponents argued that colonial officials and others' fear had added to their socio-economic distress. After the December 13th earthquake, architects argued that this second tremor had destroyed Antigua Guatemala's few remaining buildings.[137] This conclusion deepened the colonial government's concern and reinforced its decision to migrate. However, in a letter to the king, the city council argued that administrators had exaggerated the disaster's magnitude because only one person had died.[138] This second upheaval did, nevertheless, alarm the fallen city's residents.[139]

Archbishop Cortés y Larraz argued that, after the second catastrophe, "ridiculous propagandists had started spreading misinformation that a third, more destructive earthquake that was going to engulf Antigua Guatemala on March 7, 1774." The archbishop also contended that, although this prediction did not come true, the spreaders of misinformation had succeeded in starting a panic that prevented the collapsed city's inhabitants from rebuilding their homes.[140]

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[136] Pérez Valenzuela, *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, vol. 2, 257-264.
[137] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 2,847.
[138] Ibid.
[139] AGI, Guatemala, 657.
[140] Ibid.

Apprehension had also led the colonial government to migrate to La Ermita, even though it was marshy and refugees had started returning to Antigua Guatemala, the city council argued.[141] The city councilmen and the archbishop also contended that earthquakes occurred throughout Guatemala and that they should, like people in post-earthquake Lima and Lisbon, rebuild Antigua Guatemala.[142]

In addition, the former capital's occupants expressed resistance to the relocation through disobedience and public protest. In 1775, the colonial government accused Father Carlos Sunsín of having defied its orders and rebuilt his home.[143] Officials argued that new, recent earthquakes had damaged the house and that it posed a threat to Sunsín and his family. In response, administrators threatened to fine the priest and ordered architects not to repair his residence. Three years later, Charles III commanded bureaucrats to demolish the structure as a warning to others.[144]

The ex-capital's residents also showed their anger about the migration through their refusal to speak to visitors from New Guatemala, threats to revolt

[141] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 2,444, Leg. 2,847, and Leg. 3,064.
[142] AGI, Guatemala, 657. AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 2,487 and Leg. 3,064.
[143] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 56, Exp. 1,544.
[144] Ibid.

and commit suicide, and public protests.[145] In 1777, Cayetano Yúdice commissioned a songwriter to compose a group of songs that ridiculed the new capital's inhabitants and hired a singer to perform them publicly. The ditties made fun of the pretentiousness of the new city's inhabitants and expressed the opposition's attitudes toward them.[146] The following year, people residing in Antigua Guatemala staged another peaceful week-long demonstration through cleaning streets, repairing water pipes, and singing songs like "Long Live Antigua Guatemala."[147]

The colonial government responded to opposition with cultural, political, and socio-economic oppression. In 1776, Captain General Mayorga threatened to "show no mercy" toward dissidents.[148] That year, he sent troops to Antigua Guatemala to force instigators to leave, prohibited the entry of certain provisions, and fined rebels.[149] When troublemakers refused to move, the captain general made it illegal for them to speak against the relocation, construct buildings, repair or clean streets, and stage bullfights in the former capital.[150]

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[145] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 59, Exp. 1,583.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Pérez Valenzuela, *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, vol. 2, 384-385.
[148] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 57, Exp. 1560.
[149] Ibid.
[150] Pérez Valenzuela, *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, vol. 2, 378-380.

These were not the only forms of repression that the colonial administration exercised against agitators. In 1778, Mayorga ordered the Mercedarians to move the statue of Jesus of Nazareth from the Church of La Merced in Antigua Guatemala to the Church of San Francisco in New Guatemala.[151] In response, the statue's despondent devotees accompanied it on its journey, crying and saying the rosary along the way.[152] In addition to divesting Antigua Guatemala of its cultural heritage to compel residents to relocate, Charles III expelled Archbishop Cortés y Larraz from Guatemala in 1778. The king wanted to punish him for his opposition, which he considered "scandalous, offensive, and contentious."[153] In stripping the opposition of its leader, the Crown made the archbishop's followers vulnerable. Later that year, colonial officials succeeded in evicting thousands of people from their homes and shutting down businesses.[154] Through these repressive acts, bureaucrats finally succeeded in making Antigua Guatemala disappear.

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[151] Gerardo Ramírez Samayoa, "Vida social, económica y religiosa de la cofradía de Jesús Nazareno del templo de Nuestra Señora de la Merced, en Santiago y en la Nueva Guatemala, 1582 a 1821(master's thesis, Universidad del Valle de Guatemala, 2007), 245-252.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Pérez Valenzuela, *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, vol. 2, 415-419.
[154] Ibid., 383.

Conclusions

The 1773 earthquake in Antigua Guatemala sparked a long-standing controversy among the Crown, the archbishop, the city council, and thousands of residents because they could not agree on how to recover from the disaster. The colonial government proposed relocating to the Valley of La Ermita, while the city councilmen, Archbishop Cortés y Larraz, and numerous inhabitants suggested staying and rebuilding the ruined city. Between 1773 and 1774, colonial officials sponsored a scientific commission to study the recommended migration and proffer a site for the new capita's resettlement. The commissioners employed economics, experienced disaster managers, tradition and innovation, scientific methods, the occurrence of additional calamities, and the past to strengthen their argument in favor of moving. Likewise, the opposition made use of politics, economics, fear, disobedience, and public protest to resist the transfer. New Guatemala's creation offered bureaucrats who supported it opportunities for political advancement, while the relocation's critics took the chance to defend their position and their homeland's survival.

Chapter Two

The Nature of Belief

The cultural, economic, political, religious, and social beliefs of Catholic nuns and priests in Antigua Guatemala and of the K'iche' in the Guatemalan Highlands variously shaped their responses to the 1773 earthquake. Prior to the disaster, the Guatemalan capital had five convents that housed 200 women who had devoted themselves to chastity, enclosure, obedience, and poverty.[155] Also, there were 300 Dominican, Franciscan, and Mercedarian friars in the city before the catastrophe.[156] Together with hundreds of priests, nuns and friars worked together to operate dozens of convents, churches, hospitals, and schools in this profoundly religious area.[157] In addition, the clergy spent a significant amount of time praying for and preaching about the salvation of the soul. The tremors undermined some of their views and strengthened others, defining their reactions to the calamity and its aftermath.

The K'iche', who lived on the frontier and not in Antigua Guatemala, saw the cataclysm as an opportunity to revolt against Spanish colonialism.[158] After the

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[155] Cortés y Larraz, *Descripción geográfico-moral de la Diócesis de Goathemala*, vol. 1, 23.
[156] AGI, Guatemala, 657.
[157] Cortés y Larraz, *Descripción geográfico-moral de la Diócesis de Goathemala*, vol. 1, 23.
[158] The K'iche' should not be confused with the Kaqchikel who lived in and around Antigua Guatemala.

earthquake, indigenous peoples in the Guatemalan Highlands spread rumors that Captain General Martín de Mayorga was a K'iche' king who had caused the disaster to destroy colonial rule. Although the uprising did not accomplish its economic, political, or social goals, its potential to mobilize 40,000 Native Americans[159] frightened the colonial government and reinforced the Church and state's conviction that Indians in the Guatemalan Highlands had not accepted Catholicism or colonialism wholly and still clung to Mayan ways of seeing the world.

This chapter focuses on the nature of belief in late eighteenth-century Guatemala. It argues that nuns, priests, and the K'iche''s convictions influenced their reactions to the disaster. Recent debates on the clergy in colonial Latin America assert that clerics played vital economic and political roles in the colonies' social development.[160] This chapter affirms this argument, while also emphasizing the ways that ecclesiastics shaped religious attitudes toward the earthquake. In addition, discussions on Indians in colonial Spanish America advance arguments about indigenous peoples' strong ability to preserve aspects

[159] Ibid., 301-302.
[160] William B. Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred: Priests and Parishioners in Eighteenth-Century Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 1-8; Kathryn Burns, *Colonial Habits: Convents and the Spiritual Economy of Cuzco, Peru* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 1-11.

their culture, while still adapting to imperialism.[161] However, this chapter analyzes how a natural disaster reinforced and weakened belief systems in post-earthquake Guatemala. It explores chronicles, city council minutes, creation myths, eyewitness accounts, letters, poems, reports, sermons, and songs to highlight how Church, state, and Indian society dealt with notions of catastrophe, fear, and death and rebirth as they tried to rebuild their lives.

This chapter consists of three main sections. The first portion examines displaced nuns and runaway priests. It maintains that their religious and socio-economic notions, including ideas of fear, defined their attitude toward the earthquake. Also, it affirms that the catastrophe strengthened these beliefs and weakened others. A second part delves more deeply into priests' concept of fear and advance that they used eyewitness accounts, letters, poems, reports, sermons, and songs to promote the idea of moving from sin and self-destruction to spiritual renewal. Finally, a third section considers the K'iche' insurgency, arguing that this insurrection was a manifestation of how the tremor bolstered

[161] W. George Lovell, *Conquest and Survival in Colonial Guatemala: A Historical Geography of the Cuchumatán Highlands, 1500-1821*, 2nd ed. (Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 1-7; James Lockhart, *The Nahuas After the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth Through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 1-13.

indigenous people's sense of their own history and their desire to improve their political and socio-economic status.

Displaced Nuns and Runaway Priests

During and after the earthquake, nuns wrestled with upholding the religious vows that they had made when they entered their orders.[162] When the earth started shaking strongly, Archbishop Cortés y Larraz sent a cleric to the Capuchin Convent to tell Abbess María Gertrudis de Yribe y Folgar that he had ordered their immediate evacuation.[163] Before the clergyman knocked violently at their door, the sisters already knew that the situation was critical. Parts of their convent had just collapsed, crumbling masonry had almost killed one nun, and they had concluded that the earth underneath them was going to split open and swallow them up whole.

The archbishop's representative communicated to the religious women that he had sent orders telling them to abandon their convent as quickly as possible. They originally resisted, insisting that they preferred that the earthquake bury them inside their nunnery to breaking their vow of enclosure.

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[162] Asunción Lavrin's *Brides of Christ: Conventual Life in Colonial Mexico* provides a fascinating analysis of the spiritual meanings of religious life. Asunción Lavrin, *Brides of Christ: Conventual Life in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford University Press, 2008).

[163] Carta de la Madre Abadesa de Capuchinas de Goathemala, Sor María de Yribe y Folgar, escrita a la Madre Abadesa de Capuchinas de Oaxaca (1775), in Luján Muñoz, "Nueva información sobre los terremotos de 1773,": 207.

However, the ecclesiastic that Cortés y Larraz had sent to fetch the sisters warned them that, if they refused to leave, they would defy the archbishop and break their vow of obedience.[164]

In response, the Capuchin nuns complied with Archbishop Cortés y Larraz's commands immediately, but they continued struggling mentally with observing their vows of poverty and austerity after the catastrophe. In addition to a vow of poverty, the Capuchin order's members were also ascetic and denied themselves every kind of material indulgence that would bring them pleasure. However, after the earthquake, the nuns had to eat their meals on salvaged silver dishes because the tremor had destroyed their clay ones.[165] Shocked, Abbess Ana María Diaz (Abbess María Gertrudis de Yribe y Folgar's successor) affirmed that the world was upside down and that she had never heard of anything like this before the disaster.[166] In this topsy-turvy world, other orders of nuns continued to contend with their religious obligations. In 1774, the nuns of Santa Catalina

[164] Ibid.
[165] Carta de la Madre Abadesa de Capuchinas de Goathemala, Sor Ana María Díaz, a la Madre Abadesa de Capuchinas de Madrid (1777) in Luján Muñoz, "Nueva información sobre los terremotos de 1773," *Anales de la Sociedad de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala* 50 (January-December 1977): 216.
[166] Ibid.

defied Archbishop Cortés y Larraz's episcopal authority and asked the colonial government to help them move from Antigua Guatemala to New Guatemala.[167]

The disaster also caused a few priests to have a spiritual crisis and to run away from the fulfillment of their religious obligations. Immediately after the tremors, Father Pablo Jáuregui, the Capuchin nuns' confessor, abandoned them in a field.[168] In response, Archbishop Cortés y Larraz accused Jáuregui of having denied the sisters the access to the comfort that only he could provide to them as their confessor. In response, the archbishop named Father Joseph de Santa Cruz for the position of the nuns' new confessor.[169] Through this action, the archbishop complied with the laws of the Council of Trent, which stated that nuns must have confessors to help them with leading religious lives. According to the Council of Trent,

> Bishops and other Superiors of convents of nuns, shall take particular care that the nuns be admonished, in their constitutions, to confess their sins, and to receive the most holy Eucharist, at least once a month, that they may fortify themselves, by that salutary safeguard, resolutely to overcome all the assaults of the devil.[170]

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[167] AGI, Guatemala, 575.
[168] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 100, Exp. 2,148.
[169] Ibid.
[170] *The Council of Trent: The canons and the decrees of the sacred and oecumenical Council of Trent*, ed. and trans. J. Waterworth (London: Dolman, 1848), 244.

Neither Cortés y Larraz nor the religious women heard from Jáuregui until he returned to Antigua Guatemala in 1777 and petitioned the archbishop unsuccessfully for his former job. In reply, Archbishop Cortés y Larraz asked Captain General Mayorga to confirm Santa Cruz's appointment.[171]

In 1774, Father Juan de Torres, Antigua Guatemala's cathedral canon, fled to Mexico and attempted unsuccessfully to return to Spain and take his benefice (a position that the Catholic Church grants to an ecclesiastic that guarantees a fixed amount of income) with him.[172] Archbishop Cortés y Larraz alleged that Torres had left Guatemala without his permission and asked the viceregal government in Mexico City to apprehend him. At Torres's trial, the *audiencia* argued that the cathedral canon had violated the Council of Trent's laws stating that a beneficed priest cannot abandon his post and decided ultimately to send him back to Guatemala.[173] Torres's actions must have offended the Cortés y Larraz highly because the priest had accompanied the new archbishop from

[171] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 100, Exp. 2,148.
[172] 301 Torres, Pedro Juan de. Papeles relativos al canónigo de Guatemala don Pedro Juan de Torres, que entró á Rexor sin licencia. 1774. 521. 30 cm. [JGI], Benson Latin American Collection, Rare Books and Manuscripts.
[173] Ibid.

Spain to Guatemala in 1767 in the capacity of chaplain and was a member of his "family."[174]

Although some priests left Antigua Guatemala after the earthquake, all of its nuns stayed and contributed to the disaster response effort. During the catastrophe, the Capuchin nuns shared or improvised veils to abide by their vow of chastity after leaving their nunnery. Abbess María Gertrudis de Yribe y Folgar claimed that a few sisters had used the same veil jointly and that one religious woman had grabbed a statue's mantle and used it to cover her face.[175] Also, once the Capuchin nuns were outside their convent, they organized a religious procession to "see if the earthquake stopped."[176] In addition to using prayer as an anti-seismic strategy, the sisters also employed song to quell earthquake victims' fears. Shortly after the disaster, the Capuchin nuns noticed a group of distraught survivors who were wailing uncontrollably nearby. In response, the sisters intoned the Miserere (Psalm 51) collectively.[177] The religious women sang this sacred song, which begins "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my

[174] AGI, Contratación, 5510, N. 2, R. 17.
[175] Carta de la Madre Abadesa de Capuchinas de Goathemala, Sor María de Yribe y Folgar, escrita a la Madre Abadesa de Capuchinas de Oaxaca (1775), in Luján Muñoz, "Nueva información sobre los terremotos de 1773": 208.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Ibid., 209.

transgressions,"[178] to calm people's nerves and to encourage them to repent their sins.

Church, state, and society tried to help the nuns as part of their catastrophe management work. Immediately after the disaster, everyone agreed that they needed to cooperate to take the sisters out of danger and bring them to safety. Two of the Capuchin nuns' devotees, María Manuela Foronda and her daughter, Xaviera Zavala, instantly offered the sisters shelter on property that they owned on the outskirts of Antigua Guatemala.[179] Others wanted to house and feed the nuns to help them keep their vow of enclosure and regain their strength. After the religious women arrived on Foronda and Zavala's land, a priest and a religious woman's relative, Francisco Pacheco, cooperated to build a cottage to house them.[180] In addition, Abbess María Gertrudis claimed that Pacheco had taken off his coat so that the nuns would not have to sit on the muddy ground. Also, she asserted that he had given them bread, chocolate, and wine to eat and drink. Pacheco was not alone in his actions. When Church and state officials in Antigua Guatemala, Sololá, Quetzaltenango, and San Salvador

[178] Psalm 51:1 (KJV).
[179] Carta de la Madre Abadesa de Capuchinas de Goathemala, Sor María de Yribe y Folgar, escrita a la Madre Abadesa de Capuchinas de Oaxaca (1775), in Luján Muñoz, "Nueva información sobre los terremotos de 1773": 208.
[180] Ibid., 209.

heard about the sisters' suffering, they sent sandwiches, bread, chocolate, cups, cheese, and utensils to meet their immediate needs.[181]

Despite their early success in meeting the nuns' urgent wants, Church and state representatives struggled to meet the sisters' requirements as part of the long-term disaster recovery effort. After the colonial government moved from Antigua Guatemala to La Ermita in September 1773, Archbishop Cortés y Larraz stayed behind and built the nuns temporary convents on the outskirts of the city. In 1774, Cortés y Larraz rejected the colonial government's plan for the Convent of Santa Catalina in New Guatemala. The archbishop argued that the new nunnery would not allow the nuns to observe their order's rule, which emphasized a contemplative life focused on prayer, because it was not big or comfortable enough.[182] However, when Senior *Audiencia* Judge Manuel de Arredondo visited the former capital in 1776, he was outraged by his ability to see a nun's bed through a paper thin wall of the makeshift Capuchin Convent.[183] According to the *audiencia*, the archbishop's long-term disaster recovery effort had exposed the sisters to possible acts of sexual violence.

[181] Ibid., 210.
[182] AGI, Guatemala, 575.
[183] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 71, Exp. 1,775.

However, the religious women's lives did not necessarily improve dramatically after they moved from Antigua Guatemala to New Guatemala. In 1787, the nuns of Santa Catalina petitioned the colonial government to fix their convent's layout because it had prevented them from observing their vows.[184] The sisters argued that their nunnery did not have enough cells (small rooms in which the nuns lived), and, as a result, they had to share rooms, which made living in solitude impossible. Also, they claimed that they did not have an infirmary, a graveyard, or a workroom and that they needed these spaces to preserve their health. The lack of an infirmary, a cemetery, and a community room meant that the religious women of Santa Catalina had to be around sick nuns constantly, live in close proximity of the deceased sisters that they had buried in their church, and work in their cloister, where the cold air could expose them to infection.[185]

In addition, nuns' socio-economic fears added to their woes. After the calamity, a cleric risked his life to enter the collapsing Capuchin Convent and lock all of its doors and windows to keep thieves out.[186] Abbess María Gertrudis

[184] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 75, Exp. 4,555.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Carta de la Madre Abadesa de Capuchinas de Goathemala, Sor María de Yribe y Folgar, escrita a la Madre Abadesa de Capuchinas de Oaxaca (1775), in Luján Muñoz, "Nueva información sobre los terremotos de 1773": 212.

asserted that his actions and those of Captain General Mayorga, who had stationed militiamen outside the convent, had prevented looters from stealing the sisters' belongings. However, other nunneries were not so fortunate. Abbess María Gertrudis maintained that bandits had "left all of the sisters out in the street." According to her, robbers bragged that they had a right to the religious women's things because they had risked their lives when they entered ruined convents to steal the nuns' valuables.[187]

After the nuns moved into the temporary convents that Archbishop Cortés y Larraz had built on the outskirts of Antigua Guatemala, their fear of thieves deepened. In 1779, the Conceptionist sisters reported to the colonial government that thieves had recently broken into their makeshift nunnery and made off with valuable works of art that the nuns had stored inside for safekeeping.[188] This theft added to the religious women's socio-economic distress and weakened their confidence in their ability and that of the Church and state to protect them and their property. However, the Conceptionists had made a sustained effort to recover from the economic loss that they had experienced after the earthquake.[189] In 1774, they hired a new financial administrator, Lorenzo

[187] Ibid.
[188] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 60, Exp. 1,598.
[189] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 4,630, Exp. 39,583.

Montúfar, to replace the one that had run away after the earthquake. Despite expressing a desire to be patient with debtors, they entrusted Montúfar with collecting debts and putting their finances in order.[190]

In addition to socio-economic fear, nuns exhibited anxiety about blame, the unknown, wild animals, and abandonment. Some sisters accused themselves publicly of having caused the earthquake. When Archbishop Cortés y Larraz sent a cleric to help the Capuchins evacuate their convent, Abbess María Gertrudis de Yribe y Folgar knelt immediately before another priest, told him to absolve her, and asked him to ask God to forgive her.[191] She alleged that she was the "cause of these tremors."

Also, some religious women panicked because they dreaded the unfamiliar. Abbess Ana María Diaz and Sister Pascuala had spent almost their entire lives enclosed in the Capuchin Convent.[192] Their guardians had placed them in the nuns' care from the ages of four and six, respectively. After their professions, they never left the convent until the tremor forced them to evacuate. Once outside, Abbess Ana María expressed horror at "seeing herself in the

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[190] Ibid.
[191] Carta de la Madre Abadesa de Capuchinas de Goathemala, Sor Ana María Díaz, a la Madre Abadesa de Capuchinas de Madrid (1777) in Luján Muñoz, "Nueva información sobre los terremotos de 1773": 215.
[192] Ibid., 219.

world," a place she and Sister Pascuala barely knew.[193] When they moved from a cottage to the temporary convent that the archbishop had built for them, the Capuchins' feelings of terror did not disappear.

Contact with wild animals made the religious terribly afraid. Feral cats and dogs found their way into the makeshift nunnery and took the nuns' food right out of their hands.[194] A wild donkey and a "monstrous" hedgehog entered the sisters' dormitory, creating widespread panic among the religious women. Finally, the spectre of abandonment added to some nuns' distress. When Cortés y Larraz decided to relocate the convents to the outskirts of Antigua Guatemala, Sister Pascuala had a mental breakdown because she was scared that he was going to desert them there like their confessor, Father Pablo Jáuregui, had done.[195]

Despite their suffering, the sisters did not lose their faith in God and their belief in miracles. During the earthquake, the Capuchins attributed a nun and a cleric's survival to the work of God.[196] When the earth started to shake and the Capuchins' convent started collapsing, a flying fountain almost killed Sister

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[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid., 216.
[195] Ibid.
[196] Carta de la Madre Abadesa de Capuchinas de Goathemala, Sor María de Yribe y Folgar, escrita a la Madre Abadesa de Capuchinas de Oaxaca (1775), in Luján Muñoz, "Nueva información sobre los terremotos de 1773": 207 and 212.

María Ventura. However, Abbess María Gertrudis claimed that, instead of having caused Sister María Ventura's death, the fountain structure had landed at her feet, and Sister María Ventura had emerged unharmed.[197] Abbess María Gertrudis asserted that all of the sisters maintained that God had displayed his infinite mercy toward Sister María Ventura that day.

Abbess María Gertrudis argued that, minutes later, God had also shown compassion again and saved the clergyman who had gone inside the shaking Capuchins' convent to lock all of its windows and doors to protect the nuns' property from looters after the disaster.[198] The religious women concluded that another miraculous event had occurred and attributed the priest's survival to the assistance of angels who had descended from heaven to protect him from danger.[199] When the cleric reported that he had seen a statue of the Virgin Mary prostrate before an image of Christ, the nuns gave thanks to God for having spared their lives.[200] Nuns were not the only ones who expressed gratitude toward God.

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[197] Ibid., 207.
[198] Ibid., 211-212.
[199] Ibid., 212.
[200] Ibid., 211.

An Environment of Fear

The city council, the captain general, and the archbishop praised God for having had mercy upon the majority of the population during the earthquake. Immediately after the catastrophe, City Councilmen Bentura de Naxera, Juan Tomás de Micheo, Captain General Martín de Mayorga, and Archbishop Pedro Cortés y Larraz met in Antigua Guatemala's main square to offer grateful homage to God for having shown mercy and having taken relatively few lives.[201] Consequently, representatives from the city council, the colonial government, and the Church swore an oath of allegiance to the Holy Trinity as a sign of their gratitude and humility.[202]

Officials' decision to name the Blessed Trinity for the position of the city's patron was highly symbolic. Through this act, they were essentially baptizing the city in then name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and making disciples of earthquake survivors.[203] By Christmas of that year, the capital was a ghost of its former self. On September 6th, the colonial government moved from Antigua Guatemala to La Ermita.[204] In addition to officials' departure, a second major

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[201] "Es jurada la Santíssima Trinidad por Patrona de la ciudad," *Boletín del Archivo General del Gobierno*, 8, no. 1 (March 1943): 149-150.
[202] Ibid.
[203] Matthew 28:19 (KJV).
[204] Pérez Valenzuela, *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, vol. 1: 87-88.

earthquake occurred on December 13th, deepening people's concern about the capital's survival.[205] However, the Catholic Church in Antigua Guatemala decided to commemorate the birth of Jesus and commissioned the cathedral's director of music to compose a carol to lift the faithful's spirit.[206] In his *Pastores alegres*, Chapel Master Rafael Castellanos emphasized the idea of redemption through faith in Jesus Christ.[207] In 1782, former Jesuit Rafael Lándivar also published a poem, *Salve, Cara Parens*, while living in exile in Italy that stressed the notions of restoration, recovery, the phoenix, death, and rebirth in response to the earthquake and the relocation.[208]Lándivar implied that, although the disaster had destroyed the city, the move to a different location had freed it from "tremors, fear, and ruin" forever.[209]

Everyone was not this optimistic and some, like Friar Felipe Cadena, argued that the earthquake was a sign that God was angry with Antigua Guatemala's residents.[210] Cadena was a theology professor at the University of

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[205] González Bustillo, *Extracto, ô relación methodica, y puntual de los autos de reconocimiento, praticado en virtud de commission del señor presidente de la real audiencia de este reino de Guatemala*, 31.
[206] Dieter Lehnhoff, ed. and trans., *Música de la época colonial en Guatemala: Primera Antología* (Antigua Guatemala: Centro de Investigaciones Regionales Mesoaméricanas, 1984), 23-32.
[207] Ibid.
[208] Rafael Lándivar, *Rusticatio Mexicana* (Guatemala: Editorial Artemis-Edinter, 1996), 63-65.
[209] Ibid., 65.
[210] On natural disaster and fear, see André Saint-Lu, "Movimientos sísmicos, perturbaciones psíquicas y alborotos socio-políticos en Santiago de Guatemala," *Revista de Indias* 169-170 (1982): 545-558; Susy M. Sánchez Rodríguez, "Del gran temblor a la monstruosa conspiración. Dinámica

San Carlos in Antigua Guatemala, the archbishopric's synodal examiner, and the secretary of his religious order's province.[211] In 1774, Cadena published his eyewitness account of the disaster and used it as a vehicle to promote his ideas on fear, loss, Divine punishment, sin, catastrophe, repentance, and moral reform.[212]

Cadena used the chronicle as a eulogy in praise of the fallen city.[213] He argued that the tremor had transformed the capital, which had been one of the most famous cities in Spanish America,[214] into a "shattered corpse"[215] within minutes. Also, he claimed that the catastrophe had forced "honorable" women, nuns, hospital patients, and convicts to flee their usual places of confinement, which had led onlookers to fear for vulnerable people's safety.[216] Some people, like Sonsonate's Justice of the Peace-Elect, Antonio Hermosilla, died instantly from the fright that he had experienced that day.[217] Captain General Mayorga

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y repercusiones del miedo limeño en el terremoto de 1746," in *El miedo en el Perú*, ed. Claudia Rosas Lauro (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2005), 103-122; and Charles F. Walker, *Shaky Colonialism: The 1746 Earthquake-Tsunami in Lima, Peru, and Its Long Aftermath*, 21-51.

[211] Cadena, *Breve descripción de la noble ciudad de Santiago de los Caballeros de Guatemala, y punctual noticia de su lamentable ruina ocasionada de un violento terremoto el día veintinueve de julio de 1773*, cover page.

[212] Ibid, 50-53.

[213] Ibid., 3.

[214] Ibid., 4.

[215] Ibid., 19.

[216] Ibid., 14.

[217] Ibid., 15.

eventually appointed Manuel Larreta to replace Hermosilla, but the justice of the peace-elect's death demonstrated that God spared no one, not even political leaders.[218]

In addition to losing political leaders, the city also suffered the deprivation of holy images that the catastrophe had destroyed. Cadena asserted that the destruction of a statue of Christ on His way to His crucifixion was a sign that God had exempted nothing from feeling his Divine Wrath.[219] The cleric concluded his description with a call for moral reform.[220] He argued that his narrative's purpose had been to use Antigua Guatemala's destruction to rid readers of the mistaken idea that life was not fleeting and to establish a solid connection between wrongdoing and tremors.[221] The relaxation of morals in Antigua Guatemala had ultimately led to its destruction; however, the most effective way to conserve the capital rested on residents' willingness to mend their ways.[222]

Also, in addition to religious consequences, the relocation increased clerics' concern about its negative socio-economic impact. In 1774, Archbishop

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[218] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 75.
[219] Cadena, *Breve descripción de la noble ciudad de Santiago de los Caballeros de Guatemala, y punctual noticia de su lamentable ruina ocasionada de un violento terremoto el día veintinueve de julio de 1773*, 23.
[220] Ibid., 52-53.
[221] Ibid., 51
[222] Ibid., 52-53.

Cortés y Larraz wrote to Captain General Mayorga expressing worry about indigents' inability to pay to move from Antigua Guatemala to New Guatemala.[223] In addition, the possibility that the colonial government's decision to abandon the city would transform it into a "den of thieves" and lead to increased crime rates worried the archbishop. He anguished over reports that colonial officials had built a "small and indecent" cathedral in La Ermita, which, after mass, doubled as a place to "smoke, shop and sleep," undermining the Church's authority. Finally, he expressed uneasiness about the colonial administration's decision to move the San Juan de Dios Hospital from Antigua Guatemala to New Guatemala, spreading fear among the needy about how they were going to care for their health.

Cortés y Larraz was not alone. Father Pedro Martínez de Molina, an eighty-five-year-old priest from Antigua Guatemala, wrote to viceregal officials in Mexico City and to imperial officials in Madrid regarding his apprehension about the migration's detrimental socio-economic and political consequences. Molina argued that he had voted against the move because neither those in need nor the royal treasury could afford it. Furthermore, he claimed that La Ermita's climate was harmful to people's health. Finally, Father Molina asserted that the

[223] AGI, Guatemala, 657.

change of residence had led to political disagreements that the Church and state could make disappear through reconstructing Antigua Guatemala and promoting "universal reform" that included "good government."[224] Father Lorenzo Ordóñez defended the relocation's opponents in a sermon that he preached in New Guatemala in 1778.[225] Ordóñez argued that the city council and the archbishop had not lied to the king about the migration's negative socio-economic impact, which they perceived as a greater punishment from God than the tremor. However, through praying and fasting, the resettlement's critics had only incurred the colonial government's enmity.[226] Ordóñez accused officials who supported the relocation of being more concerned with promoting it than with offending God.[227]

To Captain General Mayorga's dismay, the ruined city's inhabitants continued to live there even after the Pacaya Volcano's eruption in 1775. In 1775, the Pacaya Volcano experienced a month-long eruption that covered Antigua Guatemala in ash but not New Guatemala.[228] In response, the colonial government organized a scientific commission to study the flare-up and its

[224] Ibid.
[225] Pérez Valenzuela, *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, vol. 2, 370-373.
[226] Ibid., 372.
[227] Ibid., 371.
[228] AGI, Guatemala, 450.

impact on the fallen capital's population. On July 31, 1775, Mayorga wrote to Secretary of State Friar Julián de Arriaga in Madrid expressing that the determination of archbishop, the city council, and thousands of residents to remain in the ruined city "grieved him in an imponderable manner." The captain general argued that the relocation's opponents had forgotten the anguish that they had felt after the earthquake, disregarded the colonial government's orders commanding them to leave, and sniffed at signs that God had sent them telling them to get away from the "immediate danger" in which they lived. However, there was nothing that the colonial government could do to instill fear in Antigua Guatemala's residents. Instead, residents "erased disasters from their memory," gave clever excuses for not moving, and took advantage of Mayorga's benevolent attitude toward them.[229]

After Archbishop Cayento Francos y Monroy (Archbishop Pedro Cortés y Larraz's successor) moved the cathedral chapter and the nuns from Antigua Guatemala to New Guatemala, priests continued to prey on residents' fears to promote the view that God had destroyed the former capital to punish sin. In 1789, Cathedral Dean Juan González Batres preached a sermon to commemorate the inauguration Capuchin nuns' church in New Guatemala, which he dedicated

[229] Ibid.

to Archbishop Francos y Monroy to honor him for having paid for the church's construction.[230] However, González Batres's sermon was a jeremiad in which he lamented the destruction of the fallen city's churches.[231] Instead of celebrating the church's opening, the cathedral dean's exhortation focused on remembering how the earthquake had "buried" the former capital's temples.[232] He argued that God had relocated the "Church, faith, and religion" to punish the immoral actions that people had committed in the ruined city's houses of worship.[233]

Despite the Church and state's admonitions, Antigua Guatemala's clerics continued to express angst over abandoning the historically significant churches in the destroyed city. In 1781, the Bethlehemite order petitioned Charles III for permission to keep two brothers in the former capital to watch over the religious order's monastery in Antigua Guatemala.[234] The friars argued that the order's founder, the Venerable Friar Pedro de San José Betancourt, had built community's place of residence in the mid seventeenth century and that, as a result, the Bethlehemites viewed the building as a historical monument. Six years

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[230] Juan González Batres, *Sermón que en la dedicación de la iglesia de las reverendas madres capuchinas de Guatemala predicó el sr. doctor y mtro. d. Juan González Batres, dean de esta santa metropolitana iglesia, cathedratico jubilado en la prima de canones de esta real Universidad, y confesor ordinario de las mismas madres* (Nueva Guatemala: Imprenta de las Benditas Animas, 1790).
[231] Ibid., 1.
[232] Ibid., 6-7.
[233] Ibid., 23.
[234] AGCA, Leg. 76, Exp. 4,588.

later, the king ordered the colonial government to conduct an investigation to determine the veracity of the brothers' claim and recommend whether the imperial government ought to authorize the Bethlehemites to keep two friars in the destroyed city to watch over the ex-friary. During officials' fact-finding mission, building experts claimed that almost the entire monastery was in ruins. However, witnesses asserted that the Venerable Friar Pedro de San José Betacourt had built it and that the cell in which he had died and the alcove in which he had prayed still existed. In response, the Crown attorney, Pedro Tosta, expressed political and economic concerns over the Bethlehemite order's request. He feared that, if the colonial officials acceded to the order's petition, they would delay the relocation and the Bethlehemites would divert funds from their new monastery's construction to repair their old one.[235] However, through their actions, the Bethlehemites demonstrated that their desire to preserve their cultural heritage had shaped their response to the relocation.

K'iche' Views of Disaster

Like the Bethlehemites, K'iche''s strong sense of their own history and political and socioeconomic views shaped their response to the disaster.[236] On

[235] Ibid.

[236] On religion and the moral economy of Maya politics, see Kevin Gosner, *Soldiers of the Virgin: The Moral Economy of a Colonial Maya Rebellion* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1992),

November 3, 1773, San Antonio Suchitepequez's justice of the peace, Captain Josef de Albarado Ramírez y Arrellano reported to the colonial government in La Ermita that Mazatenango's 3,500 K'iche' Indians[237] had run away from San Antonio Suchitepequez and gone to Antigua Guatemala. Albarado claimed that K'iche' from Sunil, Quetzaltenango, and Tuxal had asserted that Captain General Mayorga had come to Guatemala to "watch over them," spurring them on.[238] Later that same day, Albarado interviewed a Ladina named Luca who spoke K'iche' who told him that she had overheard Indian women talking in the town square about an Indian king who was going to return from Spain, where a Franciscan priest had taken him as a child.[239] Also, the Ladina argued that the Native American women had discussed how the K'iche' king was going to "lift taxes, return everything that the Spaniards had taken from them, and reduce Spaniards and Ladinos to Indians' current social status as forced laborers."[240] In

106-121; on indigenous rebellion and cultural redemption, see Ward Stavig, *The World of Túpac Amaru: Conflict, Community, and Identity in Colonial Peru* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 207-256; on natural catastrophe and indigenous uprisings, see María Eugenia Petit-Breuilh Sepúlveda, *Naturaleza y desastres en hispanoamérica: La vision de los indígenas* (Madrid: Sílex, 2006)

[237] Cortés y Larraz, *Descripción geográfico-moral de la Diócesis de Goathemala*, vol. 2, 301-302.

[238] "Surgen expectativas con la venida del gobernador don Martín de Mayorga. Año de 1773," *Boletín del Archivo Histórico Arquidiocesano "Francisco de Paula García Peláez* 2, no. 3 (July-December 1991): 147.

[239] Ibid., 147-148.

[240] Ibid., 148.

this way, the K'iche' used flight, history, and rumor to turn the earthquake into an opportunity to revolt against Spanish colonialism.

The K'iche''s geographical isolation contributed to their ability to preserve aspects of their culture and reject parts of Spanish civilization, including Catholicism. In the late eighteenth century, the colonial government regarded the Guatemalan Highlands, which were located 300 miles from Antigua Guatemala, as the frontier. In addition, the Catholic Church deemed the 40,000 K'iche' that inhabited the region as beyond its sphere of influence. In 1768-1770, Archbishop Cortés y Larraz spent two years conducting a tour of all of the Indian parishes in his dioceses.[241] K'iche' drunkenness, cohabitation and promiscuity, idolatry, inability to speak Spanish, refusal to receive sacraments, violence against Catholic priests, and animal and devil worship shocked the archbishop.[242]

Despite Archbishop Cortés y Larraz's dismay by the apparent failure of acculturation, the K'iche''s ability to spread rumors and their strong sense of their own history shaped their response to the earthquake. After the disaster, the K'iche' circulated rumors that Captain General Mayorga was the K'iche' king, that he had "come to the Indies for them," that he had destroyed Antigua Guatemala through an earthquake, and that he was a pre-Columbian prophet

[241] Cortés y Larraz, *Descripción geográfico-moral de la Diócesis de Goathemala*, vol. 2, 301-302.
[242] Ibid., 57, 105, 109, 118-120, and 157.

named Martum.[243] Sunil's indigenous peoples disseminated these stories to the K'iche' in Mazatenango and San Sebastián to instigate a rebellion that had the potential to mobilize 40,000 K'iche' Indians in the Guatemalan Highlands.[244] Quetzaltenango and Sololá's Indians scattered reports to the Quiche in San Gabriel that all of the Native Americans in the Guatemalan Highlands had gone to meet the captain general. In addition, they claimed that everyone had asserted that he was Indian, spoke the K'iche' language, promised to lift taxes, and "caused the earth to shake to destroy Antigua Guatemala."[245]

Amerindian intellectuals' ability to chronicle stories about Native American earthquake gods and the K'iche' king's return shaped the K'iche''s interpretation of the disaster and Captain General Mayorga's role in it. In 1768-1770, Archbishop Cortés y Larraz reported that he had found "strange" stories of the K'iche' king among the papers of an early eighteenth century "witch doctor" in Santa Cruz del K'iche'.[246] The archbishop argued that these accounts reflected the K'iche''s "living hope" of the K'iche' king's return. Also, Cortés y Larraz claimed that the K'iche' "talked about this with much individuality and

[243] "Surgen expectativas con la venida del gobernador don Martín de Mayorga. Año de 1773": 148.
[244] Ibid., 147-148.
[245] Ibid., 149.
[246] Cortés y Larraz, *Descripción geográfico-moral de la diócesis de Goathemala*, vol. 2, 58.

affection."[247] The *Popol Vuh*, a K'iche' "bible," contained a myth of an earthquake god who had the ability to cause the earth to shake.[248] Together, these stories and myths bolstered the K'iche''s sense of their own history and made it possible for them to see the captain general as the K'iche' king who had the power to make the ground tremble.

Pre-Columbian monumental architecture that continued to dominate the landscape in the Guatemalan Highlands also reinforced the K'iche''s strong sense of their own history and their ability to see the earthquake as a sign of renewal. In response to the week-long investigation that Mazatenango's justice of the peace conducted, Totonicapán's parish priest argued that he had heard a rumor that Santa Cruz del K'iche''s Indians were cleaning and repairing the K'iche' king's former palace. In addition, the cleric claimed that he had received reports that the K'iche' had stationed Indian soldiers at the castle's entrance to challenge all comers and prevent a surprise attack.[249] In 1768-1770, Archbishop Cortés y Larraz had seen the K'iche' king's palace and argued that it was a sign that Santa

[247] Ibid.
[248] Miguel León Portilla, et. al, *In the Language of Kings: An Anthology of Mesoamerican Literature – Pre-Columbian to the Present* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001), 416-418.
[249] "Surgen expectativas con la venida del gobernador don Martín de Mayorga. Año de 1773,": 152.

Cruz del K'iche' had been a politically important city prior to the conquest.[250] However, despite the conquest, the K'iche' king's fortress, which the K'iche''s political leaders had built over generations, continued to dominate the landscape and was one of the K'iche' civilization's "voices of stone."[251]

Despite San Antonio Suchitepequez's justice of the peace's initial fears that Mazatenango's 3,500 runaway K'iche' Indians were going to revolt, colonial and Church officials concluded that Indians were incapable of organizing a rebellion because they were too naïve. Within a week of starting his investigation, Captain Albarado reported with immense satisfaction that he had pacified the insurgents and persuaded them that the captain general was not the K'iche' king.[252] Totonicapán's parish priest argued that Indians' simplemindedness had led to the revolt.[253] The cleric claimed that forced Indian laborers from the Guatemalan Highlands had extracted materials from the captain general's palace after the earthquake. Also, the clergyman asserted that Captain General Mayorga had shown his gratitude toward this group of indigenous peoples through stating "that he loved them and that they were his

[250] Cortés y Larraz, *Descripción geográfico-moral de la diócesis de Goathemala*, vol. 2, 55.
[251] María Elena Vega Villalobos, "Templos, Palacios y tronos: Las ciudades," in *Los Mayas: Voces de piedra*, ed. Alejandra Martínez de Velasco and María Elena Vega (Mexico City: Foli, S.A. de C.V., 2011), 347-349.
[252] "Surgen expectativas con la venida del gobernador don Martín de Mayorga. Año de 1773,": 151.
[253] Ibid., 153.

children" and through placing his hand on their heads and paying them for their contribution to the disaster response effort. The priest concluded that Mayorga's kindness toward the K'iche' and his willingness to listen to their disputes patiently had led them to spread the rumor that he was the K'iche' king. Father Felipe Cadena's 1774 eyewitness account echoed these sentiments, describing the insurgency as an example of Indians' "silly fanaticism." In addition, Cadena argued that their naivety had made it possible for the colonial government to "totally calm the [political] cloud that was starting to form and quiet Indians' spirit [of rebellion].[254]

Conclusions

Catholic nuns and priests in post-earthquake Antigua Guatemala and the K'iche' in the Guatemalan Highlands' cultural, political, and socio-economic views shaped their responses to the earthquake. The sisters' vows of chastity, enclosure, obedience, and poverty impacted the religious women's lives after they had evacuated their crumbling convents. Nuns and priests wrestled with their ability to keep their vows and fulfill their religious obligations as part of disaster response and recovery efforts. Ultimately, their reactions to the disaster at times reinforced and at other times undermined attitudes toward culture,

[254] Ibid.

politics, society, and economics. Some priests used the idea of fear to promote moral reform and to push for the relocation from Antigua Guatemala to New Guatemala, while other clerics employed it to express their beliefs about move's negative socio-economic impact on the poor. Finally, the K'iche' saw the catastrophe as an opportunity to use rumor and history to instigate a revolt against the colonial government. Relying on a strong sense of their own history, they circulated gossip that the captain general was the K'iche' king and that he had caused the earth to shake to destroy the seat of Spanish colonial government in Guatemala. Despite the insurgency's failure, the K'iche''s response to the tremors revealed that a significant portion of the population had not accepted colonial rule and were willing to challenge it when it was at its weakest.

Chapter Three

Urban Reform and Development in New Guatemala

The earthquake presented officials, clerics, builders, merchants with opportunities to participate in New Guatemala's evolution through the implementation of urban reform and participation in socio-economic development. In 1774, a scientific commission gave strong socio-economic reasons for why the colonial government should rebuild the capital in the Valley of La Ermita. However, despite La Ermita's temperate climate and abundance of natural resources, it had few buildings and no infrastructure relative to pre-earthquake Antigua Guatemala. Commissioner Juan González Bustillo had observed two churches and one government building when he and the rest of the commissioners explored La Ermita.[255]

Nevertheless, from the moment state and Church administrators and architects set foot in the new city they started to envision ways to carry out urban reform and development in New Guatemala. The state's long-term recovery disaster plan consisted of developing various, sometimes competing, ideas about earthquake-resistant buildings in addition to moving from Antigua Guatemala to

[255] González Bustillo, *Extracto ô relación methodica, y puntual de los autos de reconocimiento, practicado en virtud de commission del Señor Presidente de la Real Audiencia de este Reino de Guatemala*, 51-52.

New Guatemala. Also, the government used this chance to put into effect socio-economic improvements to limit the Church's power in the post-earthquake city. In response to these changes, merchants seized the moment to advance in society through promoting an image of themselves as model vassals. For example, several entrepreneurs in New Guatemala who petitioned for noble titles emphasized their socioeconomic support for the relocation as evidence of their worth.

This chapter focuses on urban reform and development in New Guatemala in the late eighteenth century. It argues that officials, clerics, builders, and merchants perceived the earthquake as an occasion to improve socioeconomic conditions in the new capital. Debates on long-term disaster recovery plans in colonial Latin America have overlooked the colonial government in Guatemala's effort to conceive ideas about earthquake-resistant buildings, arguing that the relocation was its only innovation with respect to earthquakes and planning.[256] Furthermore, scholars have failed to consider the catastrophe's impact on New Guatemala's socio-economic development in the

[256] Stephen Tobriner, "Earthquakes and Planning in the 17th and 18th Centuries," *JAE* 33, no. 4 (Summer, 1980): 11-15.

late eighteenth century fully.[257] This chapter advances new understandings of urban improvement in late eighteenth-century New Guatemala through an exploration of the ideas that bureaucrats, ecclesiastics, and architects formed about urban renewal.

This chapter is organized into two main sections. The first section analyzes ideas about earthquake-resistant buildings and argues that officials, clerics, and builders developed competing notions about the ways in which they could earthquake-proof New Guatemala. The second section examines the state's efforts to imagine an ideal Bourbon city through increasing its power over colonial society. It asserts that, as part of its long-term disaster recovery plan, the colonial government sought to limit the Catholic Church's socio-economic strength and increase society's dependence on the Crown. However, this section also claims that merchants took advantage of the support that they had given to the colonial government after the tremor to advance in society.

Ideas about Earthquake-Resistant Buildings

Despite the colonial government's decision to relocate to La Ermita, officials started to develop a disaster preparedness plan in the early stages of the

[257] Jordana Dym and Christophe Belaubre, *Politics, Economy, and Society in Bourbon Central America, 1759-1821* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2007); Richmond F. Brown, Juan Fermín de Aycinena, *Central American Colonial Entrepreneur, 1729-1796* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997.

migration. Between August 1773 and January 1774, the scientific commission that the state had sponsored to study La Ermita surveyed the region and generated ideas about how administrators could plan for a future earthquake. According to Commissioner Juan González Bustillo, tremors in 1751, 1765, and 1773 had damaged La Ermita's two churches. However, he argued that architects had claimed that the reason for the temples' destruction was that the original builders had not constructed them properly.[258] Consequently, recognizing that La Ermita experienced earthquakes, the commissioners sought to determine environmental factors that made the site safer. González Bustillo argued that the region's earth was "solid" and would lend itself to the fabrication of earthquake-proof buildings. González Bustillo asserted that "deep ravines" throughout La Ermita would offer protection during a catastrophe because they would serve as easy escape routes that would save lives in an earthquake.[259]

The relocation's critics argued that La Ermita's hazardous environment was an obstacle to the migration and recommended making Antigua Guatemala's buildings more earthquake-resistant instead. In August 1773, the

[258] González Bustillo, *Extracto, ô relación methodica, y puntual de los autos de reconocimiento, practicado en virtud de commission del Señor Presidente de la Real Audiencia de este Reino de Guatemala*, 50-51.
[259] Ibid., 50.

city council informed the king of the dangers that were present in La Ermita.[260] The city councilmen argued that the "earth was muddy" and that, consequently, this lack of firmness was going to make it difficult for state and society to erect sturdy buildings on the new site. Also, the council members claimed that earthquakes had occurred in La Ermita. However, they asserted that the reason they had not frightened La Ermita's inhabitants was that it was difficult to obtain an accurate measure of the tremor's magnitude because the area did not have as many buildings as Antigua Guatemala.[261]

In contrast, in 1774, Archbishop Cortés y Larraz argued that the colonial government should rebuild Antigua Guatemala and seize the moment to introduce needed earthquake-resistant building techniques that would mitigate risk better than before.[262] The archbishop claimed that homeowners in the former capital had not known how to build houses that could withstand earthquakes. Cortés y Larraz asserted that residents had built homes that were too tall and

[260] Carta del 31 de agosto de 1773, dirigida por el Ayuntamiento a su Majestad, informándole de la ruina acaecida el 29 de julio y solicitando algunas providencias en favor del vecindario, *Boletín del Archivo General del Gobierno*, 8, no. 1 (March 1943): 161.
[261] Ibid.
[262] AGI, Guatemala, 657.

made from unsuitable materials like earth.[263] He argued that, consequently, these unstable structures had collapsed during the catastrophe.

Instead of listening to the opposition and rebuilding Antigua Guatemala, the colonial government drew up a plan for the new city of New Guatemala that promoted its opinions on making it seismically safe.[264] In 1774, Captain General Mayorga and the *audiencia* ministers sent the king a project consisting of eighty six paragraphs that detailed the steps that they proposed to take to transform La Ermita into the new capital.[265] Also, several sections of the document discussed the proposals that colonial officials suggested for constructing a city that was more earthquake-resistant.[266] According to the state-sponsored scientific commission that had surveyed the site in 1773, that region had only a few buildings,[267] so the colonial government was not going to have to deal with the expense of demolishing existing structures. Consequently, officials were going to have complete control over New Guatemala's layout.

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[263] Ibid.

[264] Kenneth Maxwell and Charles F. Walker have advanced understandings of natural disaster and urban recovery. Kenneth Maxwell, "Lisbon: The Earthquake of 1755 and Urban Recovery Under the Marquès de Pombal," in *Out of Ground Zero: Cases Studies in Urban Reinvention*, ed. Joan Ockman (New York: Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture, 2002), 14-45. Walker, *Shaky Colonialism*, 90-105.

[265] Pérez Valenzuela, *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, vol. 1, 170-218.

[266] Ibid., 172, 175-176, and 183-184.

[267] González Bustillo, *Extracto ô relación methodica, y puntual de los autos de reconocimiento, practicado en virtud de commission del Señor Presidente de la Real Audiencia de este Reino de Guatemala*, 50-51.

The colonial administration recommended enlarging the new city's squares and widening its streets to offer residents shelter during earthquakes and to minimize damage.[268] Also, bureaucrats advised outlawing tall buildings and using wooden versus vaulted ceilings in the cathedral because they believed the former to be the safer alternative. The captain general and the *audiencia* ministers intended to apply height restrictions to every edifice and house in New Guatemala, including the captain general's palace, the archbishop's residence, and the cathedral.[269] Colonial officials argued that they had based these reforms on the new city's need to reflect "good taste, beauty, and seismic safety."[270]

The king approved the colonial government's recommendations for improving New Guatemala through the implementation of seismic reform, but imperial officials in Madrid continued to debate how to make the city seismically safe. In 1775, Charles III issued a royal proclamation that commanded colonial officials to implement their plans for protecting the new city from natural disaster.[271] The decree contained only one change. To safeguard the cathedral, the

[268] Pérez Valenzuela, *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, vol. 1, 172, 175-176, and 183-184.
[269] Ibid.
[270] Ibid., 176.
[271] Ibid., 170-218.

Spanish monarchy ordered the colonial government to make it even shorter than it had originally proposed.[272]

However, the following year, imperial officials in Madrid proposed additional changes to a map of New Guatemala that colonial administrators had submitted to the Crown for approval.[273] In 1776, Minister of the Indies José de Gálvez commissioned the king's chief architect, Francisco Sabatini, to review the map that Captain General Mayorga had sent to the king. After examining it, Sabatini informed Gálvez that he believed that several of the new city's buildings, including the captain general's palace, the *audiencia*, the city hall, the cathedral, and the archbishop's residence, were not large enough in light of new height restrictions.[274] This problem had prompted the Oratory of the Congregation of San Felipe Neri to petition the colonial government for more land in 1775 because the lot they had received could not accommodate its new one-story church and school.[275]

Also, *audiencia* ministers presented competing ideas about earthquake-resistant buildings in New Guatemala. In 1775, José de Cistué, the Crown

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[272] Ibid., 172, 175-176, and 183-184.
[273] Minuta de la contestación de Don Francisco Sabatini a un oficio del Ministro de Indias Don José de Gálvez, in María Victoria González Mateos, "Marcos Ibáñez, Arquitecto Español en Guatemala," 24 *Anales* no. 1 and 2 (March-June 1949): 65-66.
[274] Ibid.
[275] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 72.

attorney, created a competing plan for the new city of New Guatemala that proposed the construction of two- and three-story residences.[276] Cistué argued that one-story dwellings were "safer" in a colony that "experienced frequent earthquakes," while "making two-story houses had greater risks in earthquakes." However, he claimed that two- and three- story homes had "known [socio-economic] advantages." For example, Cistué asserted that better circulating air resulted in health benefits for residents of two- and three-story edifices. Furthermore, property owners' ability to rent first floors to shopkeepers, while they occupied second and third stories, promoted economic development.

To support his argument, Cistué recommended the introduction of earthquake-resistant building techniques to make two- and three-story buildings seismically safe. For instance, he suggested reinforcing first-floor walls with wooden posts and interweaving second-story walls with reeds and earth. He proposed installing longer wooden posts deeper into foundations. Finally, the Crown attorney supplied examples of disaster-prone European (Lisbon) and colonial Latin American cities (Callao and Guayaquil) that had "very high" buildings and upper story housing. He argued that these structures had

[276] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 4,776.

withstood later catastrophes because owners had built them according to seismic design principles.[277]

Despite Cistué's recommendations, colonial officials and architects went in another direction and continued to promote the development of anti-seismic architecture through guild reform and education. In 1774, the colonial government approved City Architect Bernardo Ramírez's petition to reform the mason's guild.[278] Ramírez argued that masons did not know how to earthquake-proof buildings and that, consequently, tremors damaged them easily. Also, Ramírez sought to train construction workers in the art of working with earthquake-resistant technology.[279] In 1782, he presented the colonial government with a new set of mason's guild regulations.[280] The rules emphasized the promotion of seismic safety through work discipline, certification exams, and supervision.[281]

Architect José de Sierra established a mathematics school in New Guatemala in 1797 to train architects and artisans in the art of building.[282] In the curriculum that he developed and presented to the Crown in 1794, Sierra argued

[277] Ibid.
[278] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 43.
[279] Ibid.
[280] AGI, Guatemala, 466.
[281] Ibid.
[282] AGI, Estado 48, Núm. 7.

that he sought to train builders according to "the circumstances of the country." Also, he claimed that he sought to teach carpenters and masons about geometry because they did not know how to construct tasteful and durable structures.[283] However, the colonial government did not limit itself to educating construction workers on how to earthquake-proof buildings. Colonial officials also made efforts to model earthquake-resistant building practices for New Guatemala's residents. Consequently, in 1776, the colonial administration built two prototype seismic-resistant houses in the new capital's main square to serve as examples to residents and building professionals.[284]

Colonial officials, clerics, and builders' socio-economic views shaped their responses to debates on ceilings production, height limitations, and wall thickness. In 1786, Archbishop Francos y Monroy argued in favor of making church ceilings of wood and enforcing height restrictions because these earthquake-resistant measures protected temples and Catholicism during a disaster.[285] However, in 1792, imperial officials in Madrid claimed that vaulted ceilings were more socio-economically advantageous than wooden ones because

[283] Ibid.
[284] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 43.
[285] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 1,532, Exp. 24.

they were more durable.[286] In 1792, the Dominican order in New Guatemala also petitioned the colonial government for permission to use vaults instead of wood to cover their new church, arguing that arched structures made of brick and lime withstood earthquakes better than timber.[287]

Seven years later, Charles IV approved the Dominicans' request; however, he continued to support height limitations.[288] This included the restrictions that the *audiencia* had put in place in 1774.[289] That year, the colonial government decreed that homeowners could not build homes taller than thirteen feet. Also, officials threatened to demolish houses that violated this law.[290] Two years later, they created a police board to enforce the new seismic building code.[291] However, despite the colonial government's efforts to promote seismic safety in building, imperial officials believed that churches with thick walls violated good taste even though they were another example of anti-seismic architecture. Consequently, in 1805-1806, the Royal Academy of San Fernando in Madrid rejected plans for the

[286] Diego Angulo Iñiguez, *Planos de monumentos arquitectónicos de América y Filipinas existentes en el Archivo de Indias*, vol. 4 (Madrid: Laboratorio de Arte, 1934), 718-725.
[287] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 4,638.
[288] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 1,535, Exp. 10,090.
[289] Pérez Valenzuela, *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, vol. 1, 176.
[290] Ibid.
[291] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 4,005, Exp. 33,091; AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 56, Exp. 1548.

Church of the Escuela de Christo and the Church of Santa Clara, arguing that their walls were "too thick and not in good taste."[292]

Envisioning the Ideal Bourbon City

In addition to developing ideas about earthquake-resistant buildings, the colonial government used the relocation to limit the Catholic Church's political authority. In 1774, Captain General Mayorga and the *audiencia* ministers' plan for the new city of New Guatemala proposed to reduce the number of churches in the new capital by twelve.[293] Through this suggestion, colonial administrators sought to decrease expressions of Baroque Catholicism in New Guatemala because they believed that there had been too many churches in Antigua Guatemala. In addition to reforming Catholicism, the colonial administration expressed a desire to turn vacant property that that Jesuits had previously owned into useful space in the new capital. Consequently, the *audiencia's* project recommended building the new customs house on a "spacious tract of land" that had belonged to the Jesuits, whom Charles III had expelled from Guatemala in

[292] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 322, Exp. 6,622-6,6223; Jorge Luján Muñoz, "Pedro Garci-Aguirre arquitecto neoclásico de Guatemala," in *Antología de artículos de historia del arte, arquitectura y urbanismo*, ed. Jorge Luján Muñoz (Guatemala: Universidad del Valle de Guatemala, 2006), 100-104.

[293] Pérez Valenzuela, *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, vol. 1, 172 and 176-177.

1767.[294] Through this proposal, colonial officials expressed their desire to support the Crown's socio-economic priorities in new city. Perhaps bureaucrats hoped that a larger customs house would encourage commerce and lead to increased revenue for the Crown.

The Spanish monarchy also sought to decrease the Catholic Church's power through socio-economic reform.[295] In 1774, the *audiencia* supported the idea of leaving residents' financial obligations to the Church in place after everyone had moved from Antigua Guatemala to New Guatemala.[296] The Church had been an important money lender in the former capital, and the colonial government wanted to encourage this religious and financial institution to relocate through the upholding of residents' loans. However, in 1775, the Crown issued a proclamation forgiving all Church loans and giving the clergy access to the public relief fund that it had created to assist earthquake victims.[297] Through this edict, the Spanish monarchy made convents like La Concepción dependent on the colonial government for financial assistance. After the earthquake, the Conceptionists complained that they had no money because their irresponsible financial administrator had failed to collect any loan interest between 1761 and

[294] Ibid., 177.
[295] On natural disaster and socio-economic reform, see Walker, *Shaky Colonialism*, 106-130.
[296] Pérez Valenzuela, *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, vol. 1, 173.
[297] Ibid.

1774.[298] As a result of the Crown's socio-economic reform, the nuns no longer had access to the principal or the interest and had to petition the colonial government for relief to build their new nunnery in New Guatemala. The Conceptionists, like all other female and male religious orders, now had to rely on the Crown for public relief to rebuild their convents.

Officials also sought to aid earthquake victims, while making them dependent on the Crown for financial assistance. In addition to forgiving residents' loans to the Church, the Spanish monarchy offered survivors access to public relief to help them to rebuild their lives.[299] However, the *audiencia* recognized that the relocation's critics had no intention of moving from Antigua Guatemala to New Guatemala. In response, the captain general and the *audiencia* ministers proposed to assist only the people who had agreed to relocate and appear before the colonial government to claim free tracts of land to build their homes.[300] Through this recommendation, the colonial government sought to promote the migration and to ensure that the Spanish monarchy would to continue to play a decisive role in New Guatemala's long-term recovery and in its residents' lives.

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[298] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 4,630, Exp. 39,583.
[299] Pérez Valenzuela, *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, vol. 1, 172-173.
[300] Ibid.

Like the colonial government, the city council made an effort to use the relocation to promote its vision of its socio-economic role in post-earthquake society.[301] In 1792, New Guatemala resident and entrepreneur Juan Pacheco petitioned the city government for permission to establish a theater in the new capital.[302] Pacheco had already asked the colonial government for authorization, which denied his request.[303] In response, Pacheco appealed to the city councilmen's strong sense of civic pride, arguing that the organization of a coliseum in the new city would contribute to residents' enjoyment and education. Like the *audiencia*, the city council members rejected Pacheco's bid to create a playhouse.[304] The city council argued that it could not approve Pacheco's request because New Guatemala was poor, lacked necessary public buildings, and was still a young and growing city. Also, the city council claimed that it would be disrespectful to the Catholic Church and to Catholicism to promote the building of a theater when it should be constructing churches. Finally, the city government asserted that it was impossible for it to support Pacheco in this given the circumstances. It argued that it needed to focus its resources on the

[301] Gobierno Indiferente, 1792.-Juan Pacheco sobre poner un coliseo en esta ciudad, in Ramón Salazar, *Historia del desenvolvimiento intelectual en Guatemala (Época colonial)*, vol. 3 (Guatemala: Talleres de la Editorial del Ministerio de Educación Pública de Guatemala, 1951), 331-333.
[302] Ibid., 331.
[303] Ibid.
[304] Ibid., 332.

establishment of schools and other institutions that provided a socio-economic benefit to New Guatemala's residents.[305]

Despite having rejected Pacheco's proposal to establish a theater, the city council expressed its civic pride in other ways. In 1790, the municipal authorities staged an elaborate ceremonial to celebrate the enthronement proclamation of Charles IV. In commemoration of the event, the city government printed a written description of the festivities that emphasized how New Guatemala's development depended on the Crown's continued socio-economic support.[306] The city council members argued that New Guatemala's main square was a symbol of its allegiance to the Crown. On one side stood the captain general's palace, the *audiencia*, and the royal mint, constant reminders of royal authority. Across from these state-owned buildings, stood the cathedral, which Archbishop Francos y Monroy, the Crown's ally during the migration, presided over. On another side, stood the city council building – the city council's initial resistance to the relocation was now a distant memory. The Marqués de Aycinena's mansion was across form the city hall and served as a reminder to residents that

[305] Ibid.
[306] *Relación de las fiestas que la muy noble y leal ciudad de Guatemala hizo en la proclamación del Sr. Dn. Carlos IV* (Nueva Guatemala: Imprenta de las Benditas Animas, 1790).

Charles III had rewarded merchant Juan Fermín de Aycinena's socio-economic support during the migration through the gift of a noble title.

In addition, the new public fountain in New Guatemala's main square represented how the Crown, like water, was the central, life-giving force behind New Guatemala's existence. The upper part of fountain featured an equestrian statue of Charles III that Guatemalan sculptor Mathías de España had created. According to the city council, the statue appeared "as if it was walking toward the cathedral" having reached a peace settlement with the Church after Archbishop Cortés y Larraz's expulsion. In decorating the bottom half of the fountain with horses and dolphins, the fountain's designer, Spanish architect Antonio Bernasconi, had drawn a parallel between Charles III and Poseidon, the god of the sea in Greek religion.[307] This was a fitting comparison because Poseidon was the source of fresh water, horses, and earthquakes in Greek religion.[308] Bernasconi's use of these motifs made a statement about the Crown's ability to assume control during natural disasters through his likening of Charles III to Poseidon. The god of the sea had the power to cause earthquakes, while Charles III had used his political strength to shift the city, put an end to suffering,

[307] Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, trans. John Raffan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 137-138.
[308] Ibid.

and use resources at his disposal to stimulate the new capital's socio-economic development.

Imagining the Model Bourbon Subject

The earthquake presented merchants with opportunities to better their lives. In 1781, New Guatemala merchant Juan Fermín de Aycinena petitioned the Crown for a noble title.[309] Two years later, Charles III conferred the title of Marqués de Aycinena on the entrepreneur.[310] The report that Aycinena submitted to the Spanish monarchy contained a detailed account of his "royal service." He had served on the city council for sixteen years and he was currently fighting alongside Captain General Gálvez in Central America's war against the British. Aycinena claimed that he had lost 140,000 pesos in real estate and in warehouse inventory in the earthquake and had spent another 40,000 on houses for himself and his mother-in-law in New Guatemala. Despite this financial burden, Aycinena argued that he had continued to serve on the city council, had supervised the introduction of water into New Guatemala, and had lent the Crown 10,000 pesos to facilitate the new city's construction. In response to

[309] AGI, Guatemala, 411. Despite being a comprehensive biography of Aycinena, Richmond F. Brown's study does not analyze how Aycinena's role in the earthquake shaped his petition to the Crown for a noble title. Richmond F. Brown, *Juan Fermín de Aycinena: Central American Colonial Entrepreneur, 1729-1796* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997).
[310] AGI, Guatemala, 411.

Aycinena's displays of loyalty, Charles III favored him with a title to reward him and to encourage others to emulate him.[311]

Similarly, the relocation gave business owners chances to prove their worth in the Crown's eyes. In 1784, the Yúdice family asked Charles III to make them members of the lower nobility.[312] The Yúdices (siblings Esteban, María Micaela, Josef Miguel, and Mariana) argued that they deserved this honor because they had contributed to New Guatemala's socio-economic development through their entrepreneurial activities. Conveniently, they forgot to mention that their father, Cayetano Yúdice, and brother, Josef Miguel, had opposed the relocation at one time.[313] Despite certain family members' earlier resistance to the migration, Charles III granted the Yúdices hidalgo status to reward what they had referred to as their "royal service." As with Aycinena, the Crown sought to encourage the Yúdices to act in a "noble" manner and to be "useful" to the king.[314]

The colonial government also used the image of the model Bourbon subject to promote the migration and reinforce colonial authority. In 1778,

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[311] Ibid.
[312] Ibid.
[313] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 72.
[314] Ibid.; for an analysis of the Yúdices' earlier legitimation petition, see Ann Twinam, *Public Lives, Private Secrets: Gender, Honor, Sexuality, and Illegitimacy in Colonial Spanish America*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

audiencia minister Francisco Saavedra wrote a letter to Indians of Ciudad Vieja (an Indian town near Antigua Guatemala) to persuade them to move from Antigua Guatemala to New Guatemala.[315] Five years had passed since the earthquake and indigenous peoples in Ciudad Vieja had not relocated to the new capital. In response, Saavedra emphasized the natives' sense of their own history to encourage them to obey the king's order to go to the new city. According to Saavedra, Ciudad Vieja's Indians enjoyed a special status as descendants of the Tlaxcalan Indians who had assisted the conquistadors in the conquest of Guatemala in the early sixteenth century.[316] Saavedra argued that Ciudad Vieja would continue to have these "privileges" only if they obeyed the colonial government's orders to resettle in New Guatemala. In addition, he asserted that he would give them "lands as good as those that they were leaving behind, water, and as much as they required for their comfort."[317] Despite Saavedra's offer of assistance, the indigenous peoples of Ciudad Vieja continued to resist the

[315] Pérez Valenzuela, *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, vol. 2, 340-341.
[316] Laura Matthew does not delve into the response of the Indians of Ciudad Vieja to the earthquake but does analyze their Tlaxcalan identity and how it shaped their sense of their own history. Laura Matthew, *Memories of Conquest: Becoming Mexicano in Colonial Guatemala* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012).
[317] Pérez Valenzuela, *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, vol. 2, 340-341.

relocation and argued that the new town of Ciudad Vieja in New Guatemala did not offer them as many socioeconomic advantages.[318]

Conclusions

The disaster created an opening for colonial officials, clerics, builders, and merchants to improve anti-seismic building practices and to foster urban reform and development in New Guatemala in the late eighteenth century. State and church administrators and building professionals seized the moment to cultivate ideas about earthquake-resistant buildings, which led to debates on long-term recovery in the new capital. Also, the colonial government used the relocation to promote its vision of an ideal Bourbon city through limiting the Church's socio-economic power and using public relief to make earthquake victims dependent on the Crown for financial assistance. Merchants seized the moment to emphasize their socio-economic contributions to the migration and fashion new identities for themselves.

[318] Ibid., 341-348.

Chapter Four

Architects, Artisans, and the Construction of Identity

The earthquake made the colonial government very dependent on the skills of architects and artisans to help make its vision of the migration a reality. Shortly after the tremor, Captain General Martín de Mayorga commissioned a small group of builders who were based in Antigua Guatemala to assist colonial officials in developing a long-term recovery plan.[319] First, he commissioned them to survey the damage that the disaster had caused in the capital and recommend whether moving was absolutely necessary.[320] Second, he appointed them to advise the scientific commission that he had put in charge of exploring the two sites that the *audiencia*, the Catholic Church, and the city council had proposed for the relocation.[321] In 1774, the head commissioner, Juan González Bustillo, published a detailed report on the destruction of the city's churches, convents and monasteries, public buildings, and private homes that supported the relocation that he had based on accounts that architects and artisans had created.[322]

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[319] González Bustillo, *Extracto, ô relación methodica, y puntual de los autos de reconocimiento, practicado en virtud de comission del señor presidente de la real audiencia de este reino de Guatemala*, 26-30.
[320] Ibid.
[321] Ibid., 28.
[322] Juan González Bustillo, *Razón particular de los templos, casas de comunidades, y edificios publicos, y por mayor del numero de los vecinos de la capital Guatemala; y del deplorable estado a que se hallan*

However, in 1776, the imperial government in Madrid decided to send a team of builders to New Guatemala to oversee the construction of the new capital[323] and to train artisans in the art of building.[324] With assistance from foreign architects, the Economic Society in the new city established drawing and mathematics academies in New Guatemala in 1797[325] and created a new set of regulations to govern guilds of artisans in the new capital in 1798[326] to train local architects and artisans. The views of local and foreign architects toward their own contributions to the resettlement shaped their efforts to petition the Crown for favors and to seek out professional advancement opportunities. Colonial officials and clerics debated about the work ethic of Indian artisans whom the colonial government had forced to work on the construction of New Guatemala.

This chapter focuses on architects, artisans, and the construction of identity in late eighteenth century Guatemala. It argues that the disaster afforded

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reducidos por los terremotos de la tarde del veinte y nueve de julio, trece y catorce de diciembre del año proximo passado, 1.

[323] Minuta de la contestación de Don Francisco Sabatini a un oficio del Ministro de Indias a Don José de Gálvez in María Victoria González Mateos, "Marcos Ibáñez, Arquitecto Español en Guatemala," *Anales* 24, no. 1-2 (March-June 1949): 65-66.

[324] Título copiado de puño y letra de Marcos Ibáñez y que acompaña a la carta anterior in González Mateos, "Marcos Ibáñez, Arquitecto Español en Guatemala": 65-66.

[325] *Segunda Junta Pública de la Real Sociedad Económica de Amantes de la Patria de Guatemala* (Nueva Guatemala: La Imprenta de la Viuda de Don Sebastián Arevalo, 1797).

[326] *Reglamento General de Artesanos de la Nueva Guatemala, que la junta comisionada para su formación propone a la general de la Real Sociedad* in Hector Humberto Samayoa Guevara, *Los gremios de artesanos en la ciudad de Guatemala (1524-1821)* (Guatemala: Editorial Universitaria, 1962), 317-342.

architects chances for advancement but also put a strain on Indian artisans who the state compelled to toil on the building of the new capital. Old and new debates on architecture in colonial Latin America have tended to focus on the development of different architectural styles.[327] However, recent debates have advanced new understandings of the role of architects[328] and painters[329] in guild reform and in the art of self-fashioning. This chapter raises new questions about catastrophe's impact on views of builders. How did the earthquake shape state and society's views of local versus foreign architects? How did master builders use their contributions to long-term recovery to promote themselves and to advance their professional careers? How did society respond to the colonial government's exploitation of Indian artisans to facilitate the construction of New Guatemala?

This chapter is organized into three sections. The first part examines officials' attitudes toward local and foreign architects. It argues that, despite

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[327] Verle Lincoln Annis, *The Architecture of Antigua Guatemala, 1543-1773*, 2nd ed. (Guatemala: Litoprint, 1974), 21-30. Kelly Donahue-Wallace, *Art and Architecture of Viceregal Latin America, 1521-1821* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008).

[328] Jorge Luján Muñoz, "Pedro Garci-Aguirre arquitecto neoclásico de Guatemala," in *Antología de artículos de historia del arte, arquitectura y urbanismo*, ed. Jorge Luján Muñoz (Guatemala: Universidad del Valle de Guatemala, 2006), 91-110.

[329] Susan Deans-Smith, "'This Noble and Illustrious Art': Painters and the Politics of Guild Reform in Early Modern Mexico City, 1674-1768," in *Mexican Soundings: Essays in Honour of David A. Brading*, ed. Susan Deans-Smith and Eric Van Young (London: Institute for the Study of the Americas), 67-98.

administrators' dependence on foreign master builders, they also made strong to efforts to maintain local standards through the regulation of guilds and to educate artisans through the establishment of academies. The second section analyzes the endeavors that Spanish and Guatemalan architects made to use the calamity to petition the Crown for favors and to enhance their professional reputations. It argues that competing views of master builders' worth shaped how the state and society responded to these petitions. Finally, it explores images of Indian artisans and asserts that the state's attempts to take advantage of indigenous construction workers met with resistance from Native Americans and the Catholic Church.

Local versus Foreign Architects

Following the earthquake, the colonial government sought out Guatemalan and Spanish architects and engineers who were based in Antigua Guatemala for advice on its long-term recovery plan. Immediately after the disaster, Captain General Martín de Mayorga commissioned City Architect Bernardo Ramírez (a mulatto) to survey the damage that the tremor had caused and create a detailed report based on his observations.[330] Ramírez presented his findings to the state, the Church, and the city council at a "General Meeting" that

[330] Juan González Bustillo, *Extracto, ô relación methodica, y puntual de los autos de reconocimiento, practicado en virtud de comission del señor presidente de la real audiencia de este reino de Guatemala*, 26.

the captain general held on August 4th. According to Ramírez, the tremor had "completely destroyed the city."[331] In response, the capital's political and religious leaders voted in favor of relocating the city.[332]

However, the following year, Juan González Bustillo, the head of the scientific commission that the state had created to explore the sites that the captain general and the archbishop had proposed for the migration, argued that the flight of master builders after the catastrophe had led administrators to base their decision to move solely on the statement that Ramírez had provided. Nevertheless, after architects and artisans returned to Antigua Guatemala three weeks after the calamity, the captain general also commanded them to submit accounts of the destruction that the cataclysm had caused throughout the capital. In compliance, Spanish engineer Antonio Marín, Franciscan friar Francisco Gutierrez, and master mason Francisco Xavier Gálvez reinforced Ramírez's conclusion and argued that the earthquake had razed the city.[333]

Over the course of the next two years, colonial officials continued to rely on the skills of architects and artisans who had been working in Antigua Guatemala prior to the tremor to strengthen arguments in favor of the relocation.

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[331] Ibid.
[332] Ibid., 26-27.
[333] Ibid., 28-30.

On August 9th, the state, the Church, and the city council appointed representatives to the committee that colonial officials had entrusted with exploring the Valley of Jalapa and the Valley of La Ermita for the migration.[334] City Architect Bernardo Ramírez and engineer Antonio Marín joined the delegates in an advisory capacity and traveled with them to Jalapa and La Ermita.[335] In Jalapa, Ramírez and Marín studied how much it would cost to introduce water into the new capital if colonial officials decided to move there.[336] Ramírez did the same thing in La Ermita,[337] while he and Friar Francisco Gutiérrez surveyed the damage that the disaster had caused to a Church and a government building in La Ermita.[338]

Similarly, Captain General Mayorga also appointed Ramírez to examine the devastation after the second major convulsion on December 13, 1773[339] and engineer José María Alexandre to draw a sketch of the eruption of the Pacaya Volcano on July 15, 1775.[340] Ramírez argued that the second main shock had

[334] Ibid., 28.
[335] Ibid., 37.
[336] Ibid.
[337] Ibid., 46-47.
[338] Ibid., 51-52.
[339] Ibid., 32.
[340] AGI, Guatemala, 450.

ruined what had remained of several churches,[341] while Alexandre contended that the explosion of the Pacaya Volcano had blasted ash into the air over Antigua Guatemala.[342] The colonial administration collected this information and used it as evidence to support its arguments in favor of moving.[343] In 1774, Juan González Bustillo, the head of the scientific commission, based his discussion of the damage to property on the statements that architects had provided,[344] while the captain general based his report on the flare-up of the Pacaya Volcano in 1775 on the eyewitness account that Alexandre had written.[345] Likewise, the colonial government commissioned Spanish engineer Luis Diez Navarro, the chief engineer in Guatemala, to design the plan for the new city of New Guatemala in 1776.[346]

Bureaucrats' dependence on builders showed how the earthquake shaped views of architectural training and experience.[347] In 1773, Bernardo Ramírez had

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[341] González Bustillo, *Extracto, ô relación methodica, y puntual de los autos de reconocimiento, practicado en virtud de comission del señor presidente de la real audiencia de este reino de Guatemala*, 32.
[342] AGI, Guatemala, 450.
[343] González Bustillo, *Razón particular de los templos, casas de comunidades, y edificios publicos, y por mayor del numero de los vecinos de la capital Guatemala; y del deplorable estado a que se hallan reducidos por los terremotos de la tarde del veinte y nueve de julio, trece y catorce de diciembre del año próximo passado*, 1.
[344] AGI, Guatemala, 450.
[345] Ibid.
[346] González Mateos, "Marcos Ibáñez, Arquitecto Español en Guatemala": 53.
[347] Scholarship on the collective biographies of architects and artisans in colonial Guatemala is scarce. Debates tend to focus on these men's architectural works. In 1965, Heinrich Berlin published the notes that he compiled from various sources about builders in Antigua Guatemala

been an architect for eighteen years[348] and had served as city architect of Antigua Guatemala for three years.[349] Furthermore, Ramírez's father and uncle had worked as constructors for a total of thirty years, making Ramírez a second-generation builder.[350] Ramírez's most recent construction projects in the capital included the *Seminario Tridentino* in 1758 and the University of San Carlos in 1760.[351] Additionally, shortly before the disaster, Ramírez had petitioned the colonial government for permission to reform the masons' guild in Antigua Guatemala through the introduction of training on the use of earthquake-resistant building. According to Ramírez,

> Because of the frequency of earthquakes that cause the ruin of churches, convents, and other architectural works in this city, the art [of architecture] has been confused with knowledge of the rules and mathematics needed [by masons], given the practical considerations of this place, for the safety of the lives of residents and the fortune that is spent on public works. . . .[352]

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and New Guatemala. However, there is a lot we do not know about how these men's training and experience shaped their response to the 1773 earthquake. Heinrich Berlin, "Artistas y artesanos coloniales de Guatemala," *Cuadernos de Antropología del Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas* no. 5 (1965): 9-35.

[348] AGI, Guatemala, 411.

[349] Annis, *The Architecture of Antigua Guatemala, 1543-1773*, 27.

[350] AGI, Guatemala, 411.

[351] Juarros y Montúfar, *Compendio de la Historia de la Ciudad de Guatemala*, 132-133.

[352] Representación del maestro mayor de arquitectura Bernardo Ramírez, sobre arreglo de los oficiales de albañilería, para de sus jornales y precios a que deben estimarse los materiales con lo demás que se refiere (1773) in Samayoa Guevara, *Los gremios de artesanos en la ciudad de Guatemala (1524-1821)*, 237-239.

As proof of the trust that colonial officials had in Ramírez, they sent him to La Ermita with 300 Indian artisans in August 1773 to build thatched cottages prior to their departure from Antigua Guatemala.[353]

Like Ramírez, who started his career shortly after the 1755 earthquake, Spanish engineer Luis Diez Navarro arrived in Guatemala in 1741.[354] He contributed to long-term recovery after the 1755 disaster through his work on the reconstruction of the ruined captain general's palace.[355] Diez Navarro made the captain general's palace more earthquake-resistant through the reinforcement of its walls and through the reduction of the height of its second story.[356]

Unlike Ramírez and Diez Navarro, engineer Antonio Marín arrived from Spain shortly before the tremor.[357] Nevertheless, after Captain General Mayorga commissioned Marín to survey the devastation, he carried out his duties through the assistance of notary Antonio Peñalver, who escorted him throughout the city.

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[353] Carta de la Madre Abadesa de Capuchinas de Goathemala, Sor María Gertrudis de Yribe y Folgar, escrita a la Madre Abadesa de Capuchinas de Oaxaca (1773) in Luján Muñoz, "Nueva información sobre los terremotos de 1773": 211.

[354] Antonio Bonet Correa, "Ciudad y arquitectura en Guatemala. Siglos XVI, XVII y XVIII," in *El país del Quetzal: Guatemala maya e hispana*, ed. Sociedad Estatal para la Acción Cultural Exterior (Madrid: Centro Cultural de Madrid, 2002), 128-129.

[355] Annis, *The Architecture of Antigua Guatemala, 1543-1773*, 31-32.

[356] Ibid.

[357] J. Omar Moncada Maya, "En torno a la destrucción de la ciudad de Guatemala, 1773. Una carta del ingeniero militar Antonio Marín," *Biblio 3W: Revista bibliográfica de geografía y ciencias sociales*, 8, no. 444 (May 5, 2003), http://www.ub.es/geocrit/b3w-444.htm (accessed March 10, 2010).

With Peñalver's help, Marín inspected the destruction[358] and presented his findings to Juan González Bustillo, who used them create a report for the colonial government.[359] He also made a map of the Valley of Jalapa to help the colonial government gain insight into the site's disadvantages. Marín argued that Jalapa was too small for the construction of New Guatemala and that that ground was boggy and harmful to people's health.[360]

Despite the contributions that architects in Guatemala had made to long-term recovery before and after 1773, colonial officials ultimately decided to petition the king to send a team of Spanish architects to oversee the construction of New Guatemala. In early 1776, Captain General Mayorga sent Secretary of State Friar Julián de Arriaga the plan for the new city of New Guatemala that engineer Luis Diez Navarro had designed.[361] However, in mid 1776, Francisco Sabatini, the king's chief architect, rejected Diez Navarro's plan, arguing that the engineer had failed to enlarge buildings to offset their reduced height.[362] In response, Charles III approved Sabatini's assessment and commanded him to

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[358] Ibid.
[359] González Bustillo, *Razón particular de los templos, casas de comunidades, y edificios publicos, y por mayor del numero de los vecinos de la capital Guatemala; y del deplorable estado a que se hallan reducidos por los terremotos de la tarde del veinte y nueve de julio, trece y catorce de diciembre del año proximo passado*, 1.
[360] Ibid.
[361] González Mateos, "Marcos Ibáñez, Arquitecto Español en Guatemala,": 53.
[362] Minuta de la contestación de Don Francisco Sabatini a un oficio del Ministro de Indias a Don José de Gálvez in González Mateos, "Marcos Ibáñez, Arquitecto Español en Guatemala,": 65-66.

suggest a group of Spanish builders to manage the relocation.[363] Sabatini recommended his protégés, architects Marcos Ibánez and Antonio Bernasconi, for the position of architect and draftsman, respectively. Sabatini argued that Ibáñez was "thirty five years old, robust and agile," had studied architecture in Rome, and had served as his assistant on the construction of the Royal Palace of El Pardo. Sabatini also asserted that Bernasconi had studied architecture in Rome for three years, had won a prize, and would be able to replace Ibáñez if necessary.[364]

In New Guatemala, Ibáñez and Bernasconi encountered socio-economic problems that made directing the creation of the new capital difficult. First, shortly after their arrival in the new city, they were not able to find adequate housing.[365] According to Ibáñez, the colonial government had granted him and Bernasconi new homes in New Guatemala shortly after their arrival. However, when Ibáñez realized that there were no residences available in the new capital, he decided to build himself a "very small" one. In 1779, Ibáñez complained to his mentor, Sabatini, that Captain General Martín de Mayorga and his successor,

[363] "Minuta de la contestación de Don Francisco Sabatini a un oficio de Don José de Gálvez in González Mateos, "Marcos Ibáñez, Arquitecto Español en Guatemala,": 66-67.
[364] Ibid.
[365] Carta de Don Marcos Ibánez a Don Francisco Sabatini in González Mateos, "Marcos Ibáñez, Arquitecto Español en Guatemala,": 71-72.

Captain General-elect Matías de Gálvez, disagreed on all relocation-related matters and that a lack of funds made the building of the new city move slowly.[366] Nevertheless, he showed satisfaction with the progress that he and Bernasconi had made on the captain general's palace and the royal mint.[367]

However, in 1781, Ibáñez complained to Sabatini about his inability to please Gálvez's "despotic nature," which had made Ibáñez feel extremely uncomfortable.[368] Ibáñez argued that the captain general insisted that the chief architect carry out his work without any type of assistance from anyone and that he had sent Bernasconi to the Port of Omoa in Honduras to inspect a major road and to design plans for a new fort.[369] In 1782, Ibáñez grumbled about having to halt construction on the captain general's palace due to a lack of funds.[370]

Ibáñez also accused architects, such as Bernardo Ramírez, of undermining his political authority.[371] Ibáñez alleged that Ramírez had challenged his proposal

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[366] Ibid.
[367] Minuta de la contestación de Don Francisco Sabatini a la carta anterior in González Mateos, "Marcos Ibáñez, Arquitecto Español en Guatemala,": 72.
[368] Carta de Don Marcos Ibáñez a Don Francisco Sabatini in González Mateos, "Marcos Ibáñez, Arquitecto Español en Guatemala,": 72-73.
[369] Ibid.
[370] Carta de Don Marcos Ibáñez a Don Francisco Sabatini González Mateos, "Marcos Ibáñez, Arquitecto Español en Guatemala,": 73-74.
[371] Carta de Don Marcos Ibáñez a Don Francisco Sabatini González Mateos, "Marcos Ibáñez, Arquitecto Español en Guatemala,": 73-74; Informe sobre la cubierta de la catedral de Guatemala por B. Ramírez (1780) in Diego Angulo Iñiguez, *Planos de monumentos arquitectónicos de América y Filipinas existentes en el Archivo de Indias*, vol. 2 (Sevilla: Laboratorio de Arte, 1962), 721-722.

to cover the cathedral with wooden ceilings, which Ibáñez viewed as a safer alternative to vaults.[372] However, Ramírez declared that he had recommended covering the cathedral with either wooden or vaulted ceilings to comply with Captain General Gálvez's orders and not offend Ibáñez's "worthy" plans through his "limited understanding."[373]

The colonial government also experienced power struggles with artisans because colonial officials believed that construction workers did not support the relocation. In 1785, colonial officials sponsored a funeral ceremony in New Guatemala to commemorate ex-Captain General Matías de Gálvez's contributions to the construction of the new capital.[374] To this effect, they commissioned architects Antonio Bernasconi and Pedro Garci-Aguirre to build a temporary mausoleum, which they decorated with paintings celebrating former Captain General Gálvez's achievements in Guatemala. These accomplishments included the captain general's success in introducing water in New Guatemala through a collaboration with Indian artisans and engineers. According to one of the images,

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[372] Ibid.
[373] Informe sobre la cubierta de la catedral de Guatemala por B. Ramírez (1780) in Angulo Iñiguez, *Planos de monumentos arquitectónicos de América y Filipinas existentes en el Archivo de Indias*, vol. 2, 721-722.
[374] Bernardo Madrid, *Descripción de las honras que en día 5 de febrero de este presente año de 1785 se dedicaron al Exmo. Señor D. Mathías de Gálvez*, 22.

> One plaque showed Gálvez speaking with an Indian mason and an engineer with his level, beside a water tank, taking orders from his excellency. This motto, THE RIVER IS GOING TO FLOW, served to excite the gratitude of the residents of New Guatemala, as did the incredible work and efforts that he spent on ways to increase water supply in this city.[375]

However, this idea of cooperation between the colonial administration and artisans did not mirror reality. In 1779, one of the first orders that Gálvez issued commanded artisans to move from Antigua Guatemala to New Guatemala immediately.[376] Between 1774 and 1779, Mayorga, Gálvez's predecessor, had threatened to imprison Indian artisans (bricklayers, carpenters, masons, tile makers, quarrymen, and woodcutters) who did not obey the colonial government's orders to report for work in the new capital without delay.[377] In response, the colonial administration made sustained efforts to recruit only the most experienced construction workers from throughout Guatemala and San Salvador. In 1775, officials ordered the city council of Antigua Guatemala to send Indian artisans who "knew most about building" to New Guatemala.[378] Additionally, the *audiencia* made sustained efforts to learn about the skills that

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[375] Ibid.
[376] Minuta de la contestación de Don Francisco Sabatini a la carta anterior in González Mateos, "Marcos Ibáñez, Arquitecto Español en Guatemala,": 72.
[377] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 57, Exp. 1,565.
[378] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 4,776.

artisans in Indian towns possessed as well as their distance from New Guatemala to facilitate their recruitment.[379]

Conflict between colonial officials and Indian artisans over excessive labor demands often erupted in violence against indigenous peoples and the priests who defended them. In 1776, *audiencia* judge Eusebio Beleña ordered Indian officials in the town of San Sebastián el Tejar to send eight more bricklayers or tile makers to New Guatemala.[380]

In response, the Indian town council argued that they could not send anymore construction workers because they were all working in New Guatemala. They also asserted that they were rebuilding their town church because the 1773 earthquake had damaged it. Outraged, Beleña sent militiamen and Native Americans from a neighboring town to imprison the town council members. However, the town councilmen sought sanctuary in their town church because they were aware that Spanish law recognized that fugitives were immune to arrest in a sacred place. When the militiamen tried to take the town priest to New Guatemala to appear before the *audiencia*, the priest refused to go, citing Archbishop Cortés y Larraz's 1768 pastoral letter, which prohibited parish

[379] Ibid.
[380] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 4,043, Exp. 31,206.

priests from leaving their parishes for more than three days at a time without his permission.[381]

The colonial government also tried to make artisans in post-earthquake Guatemala more productive through education and guild reform. In 1795, *audiencia* judge Jacobo de Villaurrutia sponsored Guatemalan intellectuals' petition to the Crown for permission to establish an economic society.[382] The Economic Society sought to promote economic development in New Guatemala through guild reform. The Crown attorney argued that there were few associations in New Guatemala, while those in existence lacked regulations or their effective enforcement. He also asserted that twenty years had passed since the relocation and that the society had little success in improving corporations besides the pyrotechnics guild.[383] In response, the Economic Society proposed fostering economic growth in New Guatemala through the establishment of an academy of the three noble arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture and an academy of mathematics.[384] Spanish architect Pedro Garci-Aguirre would

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[381] Ibid.
[382] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 4,640.
[383] Ibid.
[384] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 4,640. Kenneth Maxwell has explored the school of architecture that the Marquès de Pombal established in response to the 1755 earthquake in Lisbon. Kenneth Maxwell, "Lisbon: The Earthquake of 1755 and Urban Recovery under the Marquès de Pombal," in *Out of Ground Zero: Case Studies in Urban Reinvention*, ed. Joan Ockman, 33. Susan Deans-Smith has also advanced understandings of the cultural politics of art education in late eighteenth century

oversee the academy of the three noble arts, while Spanish engineer José de Sierra would manage the academy of drawing.[385] In addition to the creation of drawing and mathematics schools in 1797, the Economic Society also developed a general regulation for artisans in New Guatemala in 1798.[386] This rule applied to all guilds and sought to maximize productivity through the promotion of order.[387] The statue emphasized work discipline and education. It prescribed that artisans behave in a professional manner in and out of the workplace, wear "short, simple, and decent" garb, and keep their hair short. It also stipulated that each guild should decide the course of study that master artisans must undertake as students in the drawing and mathematics schools.[388] Through these efforts, the *audiencia*, the Economic Society, and architects expressed their concern with the acquisition of architectural knowledge and looked to the Crown for support.

Mexico City through her research on the Royal Academy of San Carlos. Susan Deans-Smith, "'A Natural and Voluntary Dependence': The Royal Academy of San Carlos and the Cultural Politics of Art Education in Mexico City," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 29, no. 3 (2010): 278-295. On the revitalization of the painters' guild and the limits of reform in early modern Mexico City, see Susan Deans-Smith, "'This Noble and Illustrious Art': Painters and the Politics of Guild Reform in Early Modern Mexico City, 1674-1768," in *Mexican Soundings: Essays in Honour of David A. Brading*, ed. Susan Deans-Smith and Eric Van Young (London: Institute of Latin American Studies, 2007), 81-98.

[385] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 4,640

[386] Charles IV turned down the Economic Society's petition to found an academy of the three noble arts and ordered its members to open an academy of drawing instead. Reglamento General de Artesanos de la Nueva Guatemala, que la junta comisionada para su formación propone a la general de la Real Sociedad in Samayoa Guevara, *Los gremios de artesanos en la ciudad de Guatemala (1524-1821)*, 317-342.

[387] Ibid., 321.

[388] Ibid.

Architects and the Art of Self-Fashioning

Spanish architects relied on the colonial government's need for trained builders, personal connections, and a sense of their own worth to seek out advancement.[389] In January 1776, Captain General Mayorga sent to the Minister of the Indies Friar Julián de Arriaga in Madrid, Luis Diez Navarro's design for the new city of New Guatemala.[390] However, he also petitioned the imperial government to send a Spanish architect to oversee the construction of the new capital.[391] In the captain general's view, he had legitimate reason for not appointing Diez Navarro or City Architect Bernardo Ramírez to manage the building of the new city. Shortly after the earthquake, Juan González Bustillo argued that the colonial government had relied on Ramírez's report on the destruction because Diez Navarro could not see and was in poor health.[392] Despite colonial officials' dependence on Ramírez, he was not eligible to

[389] On painters and the art of self-fashioning in early modern Mexico City, see Deans-Smith, "'This Noble and Illustrious Art': Painters and the Politics of Guild Reform in Early Modern Mexico City, 1674-1768," in *Mexican Soundings: Essays in Honour of David A. Brading*, ed. Susan Deans-Smith and Eric Van Young, 76-90.
[390] González Mateos, "Marcos Ibáñez, Arquitecto Español en Guatemala,": 53.
[391] Minuta de la contestación de Don Francisco Sabatini a un oficio anterior de Don José de Gálvez in Minuta de la contestación de Don Francisco Sabatini a la carta anterior in González Mateos, "Marcos Ibáñez, Arquitecto Español en Guatemala,": 66.
[392] González Bustillo, *Extracto, ô relación methodica, y puntual de los autos de reconocimiento, practicado en virtud de comission del señor presidente de la real audiencia de este reino de Guatemala*, 26.

supervise the creation of the new city because he was mulatto.[393] In response to an order from the king to recommend a worthy master builder to direct development of New Guatemala, Francisco Sabatini, the king's chief architect, had recommended Marcos Ibáñez.[394] Sabatini argued that Ibáñez had studied architecture in Rome and had worked as his apprentice.[395] Sabatini also petitioned Charles III to confer on Ibánez the title "Architect of the Dominions of America."[396] The king's chief architect and his protégé believed that Ibáñez deserved this title because he was going oversee the work of all architects and artisans in New Guatemala.[397]

The Crown's reaction to Sabatini's request on Ibáñez's behalf reflected its desire to bestow honor prudently and to create an opportunity in which the architect could prove his worth. In October 1776, Charles III issued a royal decree in which he ordered Ibáñez to go to New Guatemala to oversee the new capital's construction.[398] The king argued that he had based his decision on Ibáñez's achievements as an architect in Spain. The sovereign also asserted that Ibáñez's

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[393] AGI, Guatemala, 411.
[394] Minuta de la contestación de Don Francisco Sabatini a un oficio anterior de Don José de Gálvez in Minuta de la contestación de Don Francisco Sabatini a la carta anterior in González Mateos, "Marcos Ibáñez, Arquitecto Español en Guatemala,": 66.
[395] Ibid.
[396] Ibid., 67.
[397] Ibid., 66.
[398] Título copiado de puño y letra de Marcos Ibáñez y que acompaña la carta anterior in González Mateos, "Marcos Ibáñez, Arquitecto Español en Guatemala,": 70.

new position in the new city was going to provide him with the chance to prove his worth through supervising the construction of New Guatemala and through reforming artisan guilds. Consequently, the Spanish monarchy entrusted Ibáñez with sole responsibility for proposing ideas and designing plans to promote the development of the new city. It also gave him the authority to train artisans in the art of building. Despite believing in Ibáñez's abilities as an architect, the imperial government did not appoint him chief architect of the dominions of America. Instead, imperial Spain conferred the title chief architect of Guatemala on Ibáñez – perhaps to avoid creating resentment among Spanish architects in colonial Latin America.[399] In response, Ibáñez was disappointed that Charles III had "only named him chief architect of Guatemala"[400] and that personal connections and achievements had failed to persuade the king of his worth. Despite his dismay, Ibáñez obeyed the king's orders, went to Guatemala, and made the best of this career advancement opportunity.

Spanish architects and builders in Guatemala continued to petition the Crown for favors, to emphasize their contributions to the construction of New Guatemala, and to use socio-economic fears to support their requests. In 1792,

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[399] Ibid.

[400] Carta del arquitecto Don Marcos Ybáñez al Arquitecto de las Obras Reales Don Francisco Sabatini in González Mateos, "Marcos Ibáñez, Arquitecto Español en Guatemala,": 68.

architect Pedro Garci-Aguirre petitioned Charles III to grant him entry into a mutual aid society for high colonial officials, an honorary engineering degree, and a medal of honor in recognition of his merit and service on behalf of the king.[401]Garci-Aguirre argued that he had distinguished himself as a master builder through his work on the design and building of the new Dominican church in the new capital.

In addition to his accomplishments, Garci-Aguirre used his socio-economic fears to reinforce his application. Despite his achievements, Garci-Aguirre asserted that the colonial government had failed to establish a mutual aid society for low-ranking colonial officials in Guatemala and that he feared leaving his family in financial ruin in a foreign land after his death. However, the imperial government had granted the assayer and smelter of the royal mint in New Guatemala permission to become a member of the mutual aid society for high colonial officials, prompting Garci-Aguirre to use precedent to make a similar request.

Garci-Aguirre also claimed that Indians in Guatemala wore medals of honor with the king's image to "distinguish themselves for certain achievements." However, Garci-Aguirre alleged that indigenous peoples were

[401] AGI, Estado, Sig. 5, Leg. 48, Núm. 2.

simpleminded, did not know what the decorations stood for, and did not wear the badges with pride. Feeling insulted, Garci-Aguirre petitioned for a medallion with an image of the king and queen on one side and an "inscription of the king's choosing" on the reverse.[402]

Despite support from the captain general and the Dominican order in New Guatemala, the imperial government only granted Garci-Aguirre permission to enter the mutual aid society for high colonial officials. In 1793, Captain General Bernardo Troncoso submitted a letter of recommendation in support of Garci-Aguirre's petition. Troncoso argued that "he knew" that the architect had served the captain general and the king with "a good deal of exactitude, industriousness, and application." Troncoso asserted that Garci-Aguirre had been "effective and punctual" in the performance of all of his duties.

In addition to the captain general's reference, the Dominicans provided a letter of support on behalf of Garci-Aguirre. The Dominicans were proud of the new church that Garci-Aguirre had designed and was currently building for them in New Guatemala. They argued that the temple was "one of the best ever seen in America and even in many parts of Europe." They also asserted that the architect had "opened the door of good taste in [the new capital]" and that he

[402] Ibid.

had "done away with poor methods that had been previously used in building [and] inclined everyone to good taste in architecture." In spite of such support, Garci-Aguirre only received the Crown's permission to join the mutual aid society for high colonial officials.[403] However, regardless of whatever disappointment Garci-Aguirre may have felt, he did not stop serving the king. In 1794, he presented a proposal to establish an academy of the three noble arts in the new capital to train architects.[404] The following year, Charles IV made Garci-Aguirre the director of the school of drawing.[405]

The earthquake also presented Guatemalan architects with opportunities to prove their worth and to petition the Crown for favors. In 1782, City Architect Bernardo Ramírez, who was mulatto, appealed to Charles III to declare him, his children, and his descendants white so that they could enjoy the same rights and privileges as Spaniards.[406] Ramírez argued that his ancestors' marriages with mulatto females had "infected his [social] position]." However, Ramírez believed that he was worthy of becoming white through his contributions to the

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[403] Ibid.
[404] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 4,640.
[405] Ibid.
[406] AGI, Guatemala, 411. On purchasing whiteness in colonial Latin America, see Ann Twinam "Pedro de Ayarza: The Purchase of Whiteness," in *The Human Tradition in Colonial Latin America*, ed. Kenneth J. Andrien (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 2002), 194-210. In addition to the Ayarza case, Twinam analyzes the petition that Bernardo Ramírez submitted to the Crown in 1782.

construction of New Guatemala. Ramírez asserted that the skills that he had exhibited in the fields of architecture and hydraulics "before and after the ruin" were proof of his service on behalf of the Crown.[407] Furthermore, he claimed that he had built thatched cottages in La Ermita shortly after the tremor, introduced water into New Guatemala, distributed lots to numerous Indian towns, and brought together supplies and artisans. Ramírez alleged that he had saved the Crown $80,000 pesos through his "ability and good judgment." To support his petition, Ramírez attached a copy of the new masons' guild regulations that he had created for Captain General Matías de Gálvez in 1782.[408]

This was not the first time that Ramírez had made efforts to seek out official recognition. In 1773, he appealed to Captain General Martín de Mayorga to grant him a badge as a distinguishing mark of office.[409] Despite becoming city architect in 1770,[410] Ramírez complained that he did not always receive the respect he believed he deserved as a "public official."[411] In response, Ramírez

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[407] AGI, Guatemala, 411.
[408] Ibid.
[409] Representación del maestro mayor de arquitectura Bernardo Ramírez, sobre arreglo de los oficiales de albañilería, paga de sus jornales, y precios a que deben estimarse los materiales con lo demás que se refiere in Samayoa Guevara, *Los gremios de artesanos en la ciudad de Guatemala (1524-1821)*, 237-239.
[410] Annis, *The Architecture of Antigua Guatemala, 1543-1773*, 27.
[411] Representación del maestro mayor de arquitectura Bernardo Ramírez, sobre arreglo de los oficiales de albañilería, paga de sus jornales, y precios a que deben estimarse los materiales con lo

appealed to the colonial government for an emblem as a sign of his authority to carry out the duties of his position.[412]

Charles III denied Ramírez's request to purchase whiteness, but bureaucrats and ecclesiastics in New Guatemala continued to support the city architect's efforts to remake his identity. Despite having refused to make Ramírez white, the king decided to reward Ramírez's services through promotion to captain of the pardo militia, which Ramírez rejected because it highlighted his race.[413] Nevertheless, colonial officials and the clergy in the new capital backed Ramírez before and after his petition. In 1782, Captain General Matías de Gálvez wrote a letter of recommendation in support of Ramírez's request. Gálvez argued that Ramírez had enlisted other mulatto artisans to help with the relocation and that Ramírez had hoped that his recruitment efforts would persuade the king that he deserved the requested favor. Gálvez believed that the imperial government would encourage other construction workers of color to support the migration through changing Ramírez's racial status from mulatto to white.[414] Regardless of the failure of his petition, Ramírez continued to

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demás que se refiere in Samayoa Guevara, *Los gremios de artesanos en la ciudad de Guatemala (1524-1821)*, 238.

[412] Ibid., 237-238.

[413] AGI, Guatemala, 411.

[414] Ibid.

contribute to the building of New Guatemala. In 1787, he approved the design for the Convent of Santa Clara and entered into a contract with the Franciscans to oversee the nunnery's construction.[415] He also completed the creation of the new Franciscan monastery in 1790.[416] In response, the Franciscans[417] and an *audiencia* minister[418] supported Ramírez's attempts to remake his image as they accorded him use of the honorific "Don" typically reserved for whites to refer to him. For example, the Franciscan order made two references to Don Bernardo Ramírez's work on construction of the Clarist convent and the Franciscan monastery in New Guatemala in their minutes from 1787 and 1790. Through this act, the Franciscans showed their support and respect the mulatto architect who was helping them with the rebuilding of their male and female orders. Not only pardos, but natives contributed to the movement to New Guatemala.

Images of Indian Artisans

In response to the disaster, the colonial government became dependent on the sense of duty that Indian artisans felt toward Crown and on the use of threats to force them to facilitate the construction of New Guatemala. In 1775, Captain

[415] Romeo Tovar Astorga, *Documentos para la historia de la orden Franciscana de América Central*, vol. 2 (Guatemala: Tip. Nacional, 1986), 292-294.
[416] Ibid., 326-327.
[417] Ibid., 292-294 and 326-327.
[418] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 72, Exp. 1,696 and AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 97, Exp. 1,132.

General Martín de Mayorga appointed Fernando del Sobral justice of the peace of Antigua Guatemala.[419] In addition to settling disputes among thousands of residents who had chosen to remain in the ex-capital, the captain general entrusted Sobral with overseeing forced Indian labor drafts for the building of the new city.[420] In 1776, Sobral succeeded in his efforts to make the indigenous peoples of San Sebastián del Tejar obey the orders of the colonial government and send thirty bricklayers and tile makers to assist in the creation of New Guatemala.[421] In 1777, Sobral was able to send 1,300 Native American builders to help colonial officials with the introduction of water into the new city.[422]

Such efforts continued the next year, for in 1778, Captain General Mayorga ordered José Ponce de León, Sobral's successor, to force Indian masons and tile makers to move from Jocotentango to their new town on the outskirts of New Guatemala. Mayorga also authorized Ponce de León to arrest Indian builders who returned to Jocotenango.[423]

In response to Ponce de León's orders, the Indian town council of Comalpa sent all of their male construction workers, including children, to the

[419] Nombramiento de Justicia Mayor a Don Fernando del Sobral del suelo y sitio de la arruinada Guatemala in Manuel Rubio Sánchez, *Monografía de la ciudad de Antigua Guatemala*, vol. 2 (Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional, 1989), 349-353.
[420] Ibid.
[421] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 4,043, Exp. 31,206.
[422] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 59, Exp. 1,574.
[423] Ibid.

new capital.[424] Outraged, *Audiencia* Judge Ramón de Posada reprimanded Ponce de León for sending indigenous boys to the new city. In response, the Indian town councilmen argued that they had recruited Native American young men out of the sense of obedience they felt toward the colonial government.[425]

In addition to force, the colonial government employed utility to encourage Indian artisans to use their skills to assist in the construction of New Guatemala. In 1776, the indigenous town council of San Sebastián el Tejar disobeyed the colonial government's orders to send eight more bricklayers and tile makers to the new capital.[426] The town council members argued that they were busy with repairing their damaged church and that they were not able to go to the new city. Scandalized, Beleña sent militiamen to arrest the town councilmen. Beleña alleged that the Indians were involved in the "useless" task of rebuilding their temple instead of using their bricklaying and tile making abilities to contribute to the creation of New Guatemala in productive ways.[427] Similarly, the colonial government made use of the notions of improvement and

[424] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 58, Exp. 1,567.
[425] Ibid.
[426] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 4,043, Exp. 31, 206.
[427] Ibid.

service to encourage Indian artisans to earn wages and "to be useful to the king" through their work on the relocation.[428]

Despite feeling a sense of responsibility toward the Crown, Indian artisans made efforts to negotiate excessive labor demands with the colonial government through petitions for labor exemptions. In 1777, the indigenous town council of Sololá petitioned the *audiencia* exonerate them from sending Native American artisans to New Guatemala.[429] The town council members argued that many of Sololá's construction workers had either died or run away because the colonial government overworked them. However, the town council's petition fell on deaf ears. In response, the *audiencia* ministers denied the indigenous people's request for a dispensation and ordered colonial officials in Sololá to organize a search party to capture runaway Indians.[430]

In 1777, Indians from Quetzaltenango pleaded with the colonial government to free them from the responsibility of having to toil on the building of New Guatemala.[431] They alleged that a series of epidemics had decimated the indigenous population in Quetzaltenango, leading many survivors to flee from the town to save their lives. In reply, the *audiencia* excused the petitioners from

[428] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 57, Exp. 1,564.
[429] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 62, Exp. 4,473.
[430] Ibid.
[431] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 62, Exp. 4,474.

their labor obligations but only after having argued that this exemption was going to delay the creation of New Guatemala.[432] Indian artisans continued to make efforts to negotiate labor exemptions with the colonial government because they believed that colonial officials had been taking advantage of them. In 1780, indigenous construction workers from the town of Santiago Patzicia petitioned the *audiencia* to release them from their labor obligations because they had not had a day off in over a year.[433]

The Catholic Church also defended Indian artisans through criticism of the colonial government's efforts to exploit them. In 1778, Archbishop Pedro Cortés y Larraz condemned colonial officials who mistreated indigenous builders.[434] In a scathing letter to Captain General Martín de Mayorga, Archbishop Cortés y Larraz argued that colonial administrators such as "Pedro the Cruel" overworked Indian artisans, causing them to become ill, and prevented them from going to hear mass, undermining the Church's evangelization efforts.

[432] Ibid.
[433] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 63, Exp. 3,303.
[434] AGCA, Sig. A1, leg. 63, Exp. 4,509.

In 1797, the parish priest of Jocotenango charged that the colonial government treated indigenous construction workers "worse than slaves."[435] He argued that the earthquake had a negative socio-economic impact on Jocotenango. However, colonial officials had overlooked all of the suffering that the town had experienced in their efforts to force Indian artisans and their children to contribute to the construction of Guatemala. Echoing Archbishop Cortés y Larraz's earlier warning, the cleric claimed that Native Americans felt so overworked that they failed to attend mass and were in danger of forgetting the purpose of religion in their lives.[436]

Conclusions

The earthquake made the colonial government highly dependent on skills that architects and artisans possessed to facilitate the migration. Despite their initial reliance on master builders in Guatemala, colonial officials ultimately decided to petition the Crown for a Spanish builder to oversee the construction of New Guatemala. However, competing visions of how to build the new capital led to debates about authority between local and foreign architects. Additionally, the colonial administration experienced power struggles with Indian artisans and accused them of not using their abilities to assist the progress of the

[435] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 368, Exp. 7,598.
[436] Ibid.

resettlement. In response, architects, the *audiencia*, and the Economic Society joined forces to establish schools to train construction workers and created a new regulation for all guilds to control them better. Spanish and Guatemalan master builders who made use of their abilities to aid the relocation used this opportunity to petition the Crown for favors and remake their identities through advancement. Unsuccessful applicants continued to support the move through the exercise of their profession and went on to enjoy the backing of bureaucrats and the clergy in New Guatemala. Nevertheless, thousands of Indian artisans suffered tremendously as a result of the exploitation that they experienced at the hands of colonial officials. Although many obeyed the colonial government's orders, indigenous construction workers also made efforts to negotiate labor exemptions. The Catholic Church spoke out in defense of abused Native American builders. In response, officials continued to use violence against Indian artisans but also emphasized the ideas of self-betterment and usefulness to stimulate indigenous craftspeople to participate in the creation of New Guatemala.

Chapter Five

Reconstructing Colonial Lives

The system of public relief that the colonial government put in place was part of its long-term disaster recovery plan. In 1774, Captain General Martín de Mayorga and the *audiencia* judges proposed giving homeowners the same lot in New Guatemala that they had owned in Antigua Guatemala.[437] To accelerate the relocation, they also suggested bestowing pieces of property on someone else if householders did not appear before the colonial government to claim their plots.[438]

In response, in 1775, Charles III commanded colonial officials to set up a public relief fund to assist those in need. He authorized the colonial administration to use sales taxes over the next ten years to pay for government aid.[439] The king gave the Catholic Church access to assistance because he had decided to forgive the loans that the Church had made to the residents of the former capital.[440] Captain General Mayorga issued an order on December 9, 1775 in which he told the inhabitants of the ruined city that they needed to start to prepare a history of the titles and deeds to the property that they had lost in the

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[437] Pérez Valenzuela, *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, vol. 1, 172-173.
[438] Ibid., 172-174.
[439] Ibid., 173.
[440] Ibid., 172.

disaster.[441] Recognizing that this task was going to be extremely difficult or virtually impossible for some property owners, the captain general assured everyone that they did not have to present property records immediately.[442] He also reminded people that the sovereign had "generously" given up sales taxes temporarily to help the community, especially the poor.[443]

This chapter focuses on the efforts of the poor to remake themselves after the catastrophe through public relief, charity, and self-help. It advances new understandings of poverty through raising novel questions about disaster, the poor, and survival strategies. How did the impoverished seek out aid? How did philanthropists attempt to help the destitute? How did the ability to provide for oneself without assistance from others present a viable alternative to help from the colonial government? Recent debates on the indigent in colonial Latin America have argued that neediness had different meanings depending on an individual's sense of worth.[444] Furthermore, discussions about those who suffered from penury also assert that they developed strategies, such as

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[441] Ibid., 230.
[442] Ibid.
[443] Ibid., 230-231.
[444] Cynthia E. Milton, *The Many Meanings of Poverty: Colonialism, Social Compacts, and Assistance in Eighteenth-Century Ecuador* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 1-14.

petitioning the colonial government for support, to improve their socio-economic condition.[445]

This chapter advances new understandings of the ways in which calamity shaped earthquake victims' views of poverty and ways to escape from it. It is organized into two sections. The first part analyzes the system of public relief that the colonial government put in place in response to the cataclysm. It also examines petitions for aid to give a fuller sense of applicants' hopes and fears in post-earthquake Guatemala. The second section considers charity and self-help to show how people without access to government assistance made efforts to improve their lives.

The Politics of Public Relief

The Spanish monarchy's decision to assist the poor in response to the catastrophe shaped colonial officials' views of the Crown's generosity. In 1789, Joachin Basco, the senior *audiencia* judge, commissioned Father Carlos Cadena to write a description of the funeral ceremony that the colonial government had held in honor of Charles III in New Guatemala.[446] Cadena argued that the king had revealed his true nature through his reaction to the earthquake. Unlike other

[445] Ibid.

[446] Carlos Cadena, *Descripción de las reales exequias que a la tierna memoria de nuestro augosto, y católico monarca el señor d. Carlos III, rey de España, y emperador de las Indias, se hicieron de orden del real acuerdo en la muy noble, y muy leal ciudad de Guatemala* (Nueva Guatemala, 1789?), title page.

rulers in history who had looked upon the struggles of their people with indifference and had let them perish, Charles III had developed a long-term disaster recovery plan to assist Guatemalans.[447]

In response to the tremor, the imperial government had decided to resettle the population in a place where it would not suffer another disaster.[448] According to Cadena, this decision alone had been enough to convince everyone of sovereign's sense of piety. However, in addition to the relocation, the imperial government had also given up sales taxes for ten years to pay for the distribution of assistance to the community, especially the poor. Furthermore, the monarch had agreed to pay for the construction of the cathedral in New Guatemala.[449] However, Cadena's vision of the monarch as the protector of his subjects through the allocation of aid did not necessarily mirror reality in New Guatemala. In 1775, a member of the committee that the colonial government had created to review petitions lamented that it had received over 1,000 applicants and that they had started to backlog faster than officials could process them.[450]

Petitioners who had received lots but not money to build their houses emphasized efforts to secure loans and earn money through hard work prior to

[447] Ibid., 3-4.
[448] Ibid., 4-5.
[449] Ibid.
[450] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 1,547.

appealing to the colonial government for help. For example, in 1783, Doña Cecilia Aguilera y Covar applied to the colonial administration for money to enlarge her small house.[451] She argued that she had purchased a home so that she would be able to move to New Guatemala. She asserted that she had paid more than the property was worth because of the scarcity of homes in the new capital at that time. Furthermore, leasing was impossible because rents had been high at the time and building was out of the question because the earthquake had destroyed everything she owned, leaving her destitute. Nevertheless, she had to provide for three daughters and two sons.

Consequently, she decided to take out several loans, using some of the money to pay for a residence in the new city and investing the rest in the hope that she would be able to use the interest to meet the needs of her family. However, she had met with obstacles taking care of her business affairs outside of New Guatemala because she was a woman.

Her investment had not "taken off" and she experienced further losses. Despite these misfortunes, she argued that all of her children were employed. One of her sons worked in the royal mint, while the other had a job with the postal service. Her daughters also ran small businesses, but the colony's war

[451] AGCA, Leg. 4,005, Exp. 30,401.

against the British had slowed down commerce. Having emphasized the strong work ethic of her family, Doña Cecilia argued that the colonial government had given her a lot but not money to build a home. She asserted that her present afflictions had led her to appeal to colonial officials for help.[452]

While some applicants emphasized existing misfortunes to support their petitions, others stressed personal honor and the contributions of their ancestors to development in Antigua Guatemala. In 1777, Doña Josepha de Mella y Frias Abarca y Paniagua asked the colonial government to continue to exempt her from paying taxes on her home.[453] She argued that she lived in a small thatched cottage that she had purchased after the earthquake destroyed all of her property. However, she asserted that a notary had been to see her twice to make her pay the taxes on her home. She claimed that she had contested the assessment because the colonial government only levied taxes on businesses that occupied spaces around the main plaza and not residences.

To back her appeal, Doña Josefa argued that she was the legitimate daughter of Don Francisco de Mella and Doña Gertrudis Abarca Paniagua and a virgin. In addition to her sense of personal worth, Doña Josefa alleged that her grandfather, Captain Jerónimo de Abarca y Paniagua, had been on the city

[452] Ibid.
[453] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 4,005, Exp. 30,395.

council of Antigua Guatemala and had spent over 15,000 pesos on the construction of the fountain in the main plaza. She claimed that her grandfather had left a copy of these records in the archive of the city council so that the city councilmen and colonial officials would watch over his descendants in light of his gift to the former capital. Finally, she asked the authorities to have pity on her because she had been sick in bed and destitute since the tremor.[454]

Applicants also stressed how they had practiced patience and resourcefulness while they waited to receive assistance from the colonial government. In 1777, Don Pantaleón del Aguila, an *audiencia* minister, re-petitioned the colonial administration for the 1,000 pesos that it had promised to give him but that had never arrived.[455] The committee in charge of distributing aid had bestowed the money upon Don Pantaleón so that he could use it to build a house in New Guatemala. Don Pantaleón argued that he had never received the funds because the reserve had been empty until now. He also asserted that he had been willing to endure the wait and had started to construct a home with other resources. Nevertheless, he claimed that a lack of additional capital had prevented him from completing his residence. Realizing that the colonial government had replenished the coffers of the relief fund, Don Pantaleón

[454] Ibid.
[455] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 89, Exp. 4648.

decided to re-apply for help. He argued that he planned to use the assistance that he hoped to receive to complete the construction of his dwelling.[456]

The colonial government's inability to allocate assistance effectively shaped residents' views on the relocation and added to their fears. In 1777, Doña Francisca Xaviera de Zavala, a widow with two sons, submitted a series of petitions to the colonial administration for help.[457] She argued that the relief board had assigned her 2,000 pesos but that she had not received any money. She argued that she could not afford to move from Antigua Guatemala to New Guatemala without support from colonial officials. The loss of "valuable" property in the old capital had added to her financial woes and forced her to remain in the old city with her two sons. Realizing that she would not be able to pay to go to New Guatemala, she appealed to the colonial government to give her the 2,000 pesos it had promised her.

When administrators failed to deliver on their word, Doña Francisca requested help a second time. On this occasion, she emphasized that she planned to use the money to build a house in New Guatemala and that she had authorized her son, Don Josef María Foronda, to claim it on her behalf. The third instance in which Doña Francisca applied for aid she stressed in no uncertain

[456] Ibid.
[457] AGCA, Sig. 89, Exp. 4,651.

terms that she had lost 20,000 pesos in property and that the earthquake had left her "totally destitute." Doña Francisca's inability to build a house on the lot that the colonial government had given to her added to hear fears. She argued that she had come to understand that colonial officials were threatening to take lots away from those who did not erect homes and give them to those who would do so.[458]

When the relief board made a mistake, claimants took matters into their own hands and made strong efforts to protect their socio-economic interests. In 1778, Doña Simona Saldibar, a widow, explained that the colonial government had given her a lot and a house that was worth 500 pesos.[459] The piece of property was conveniently located near the Monastery of San Francisco, where several of Doña Simona's relatives, including her two sons, were priests. However, the house that the colonial administration had given to Doña Simona was located somewhere else in New Guatemala, which was quite problematic. Consequently, Doña Simona appealed to colonial officials to give her permission to build her house on the parcel near the Monastery of San Francisco because she depended on her family for help.[460]

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[458] Ibid.
[459] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 5921, Exp. 51,392.
[460] Ibid.

Young women who wanted to become nuns hoped to use disaster relief to make their dreams comes true. In 1778, Sister María Josefa Ortíz de Letona, a novice in the Convent of Santa Clara, reapplied to the colonial government for the 2,000 pesos that it had allocated for her in response to the losses that she had suffered in the earthquake.[461] According to Sister María Josefa, she had lost "all of her property" in the catastrophe. Realizing that her profession was upon her and that the $2,000 pesos that colonial officials had earmarked for her represented her dowry, Sister María Josefa asked the abbess of the convent for permission to re-petition colonial officials for help. She feared that she would not be able to become a professed nun without the support of the state because she had become penniless after the earthquake.[462]

In 1784, Doña Gertrudis Yvañez applied to the colonial government for permission to sell the house that it had given to her mother after the tremor so that she could use the proceeds from the sale to become a nun in the Convent of Santa Clara also.[463] According to Doña Gertrudis, she and her brothers had inherited the home from their mother; however, after her brothers decided to join

[461] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 5,921, Exp. 51,409.
[462] Ibid.
[463] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 5,921, Exp. 51,405.

the Church, she became the sole heiress. She explained that she planned to take the 1,000 pesos generated from the sale to pay for part of her dowry.[464]

Women with religious vocations also emphasized loss, contributions to the relocation, and precedent in their efforts to persuade the colonial government that they deserved assistance. In 1790, Doña Anna María de Barroeta asked members of the relief board to give her 33 pesos to become a Discalced Carmelite nun.[465] She argued that her father, a colonial official, had lost all of the family's possessions as a result of the tremor and that she had lost her grandmother as a result of the earthquake.[466] Despite these hardships, Doña Anna María argued that her father, Don Joseph Manuel de Barroeta, had continued to support the relocation through his hard work and dedication. When Don Joseph retired, his son and Doña Anna María's brother, Don Juan Mariano, had inherited his father's post in the colonial bureaucracy and had continued to labor on behalf of the migration.

Doña Anna María argued that she had wanted to become a Discalced Carmelite nun for some time but that her appeals to the colonial government for support had always ended in disappointment. She forwarded that colonial

[464] Ibid.
[465] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 77, Exp. 1,744.
[466] Ibid.

officials had repeatedly rejected her requests for help, telling her that there were others whose needs were more urgent. However, this time, Doña Anna María emphasized that the Capuchin Convent had already agreed to take her on as a nun because the majority of professed nuns were elderly. Doña Anna María argued that her request was not without precedent and asserted that, in 1777, colonial administrators had given Sister María Josefa Ortíz de Letona money to pay for her dowry.[467]

Second-time petitioners stressed their strong sense of loyalty and obedience to the Crown to persuade the relief board that they deserved support. In 1778, Doña Rosa Cuellar, a widow, reapplied for help.[468] She argued that she and her family had been "one of the first families that had relocated after the destruction of Antigua Guatemala." She also asserted that "they had been one of the first to appear before the relief board" and petition for government assistance. However, echoing *audiencia* minister Don Pantaleón del Aguila, Doña Rosa claimed that the colonial government had assigned her 1,000 pesos to build a house but that she had not received any money because the relief board's coffers were empty. Realizing that she needed to construct a home on the lot that the colonial administration had given to her, Doña Rosa decided to reapply for

[467] Ibid.
[468] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 217, Exp. 5098.

aid. Consequently, to strengthen her appeal, she decided to focus attention on her and her family's support for the relocation.[469]

A sense of awareness that the colonial government had given help to others but not to them strengthened the resolve of supplicants to seek out aid that they believed they deserved. In 1783, Doña Paloma Ybarra, a widow, decided to appear before the relief board yet again.[470] She argued that she knew that the colonial government had distributed houses and money to those in need since her arrival in New Guatemala. However, she also asserted that colonial officials had "overlooked her petitions." She explained that she was poor and not able to provide for her children, her mother, and her sister. She recalled that she had owned property in Antigua Guatemala but had left it all behind when the colonial administration ordered her to relocate her bakery to New Guatemala. In an effort to lend credit to her story, she included the titles and deeds to the real estate that she had owned in the former capital.[471]

Despite having received an assigned lot, those who did not build a house immediately ran the risk of losing it to someone else. In 1779, Don Marcelo Salomon had to reapply for a new lot after the colonial government had given his

[469] Ibid.
[470] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 80, Exp. 1,751.
[471] Ibid.

old one to someone else.[472] Don Marcelo argued that he had not started constructing his home because he was still gathering materials. He asserted that he had heard that the colonial administration had transferred his piece of property to another person the week before. Nevertheless, rather than make an effort to get his plot back, Don Marcelo decided to reapply to the relief board for a different one. He even went as far as to seek out an available lot and to suggest to colonial officials that they give him his chosen one instead.[473]

In addition to addressing the concerns of those who had lost their lots to others, the colonial government also had to decide how to respond to the heirs of aid recipients who had subsequently died. In 1791, Doña Juana María and Doña Thomasa de Zabal Jáuregui, the daughters of Doña Mariana Marín, petitioned the relief board for the 1,000 pesos that it had allotted to their deceased mother in 1777 in response to the "losses" that she had suffered in the earthquake.[474] To support their request, the sisters presented the colonial government with a copy of the will that their mother had made in 1780 naming them joint heirs.

According to Doña Juana María and Doña Thomasa, the colonial administration never gave their mother the money because the treasury did not

[472] AGCA, Leg. 84, Exp. 1,791.
[473] Ibid.
[474] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 80, Exp. 1,771.

have any funds. In response, the siblings claimed that Doña Mariana had asked Captain General Martín de Mayorga and Captain General Matías de Gálvez for the money on several occasions but died without ever having seen any of it come into her hands.[475] In reaction to the determination of Doña Mariana's heirs to claim the aid that the colonial government had promised but failed to give to Doña Mariana, colonial officials decided to reconsider a question that they had raised back in 1777. Should the colonial administration nullify grants to petitioners who died before it had a chance to give them money? After half a dozen more beneficiaries came forward that year, bureaucrats decided to accept the validity of their claims as long as they showed that they had a right of inheritance.[476]

The Power of Charity and Self-Help

The earthquake also shaped views on charity and led wealthy entrepreneurs to create ways to give back to the community and ease the suffering of the less fortunate. During the tremor, merchant Juan Fermín de Aycinena told Captain General Martín de Mayorga that he would pay for the biscuits that the colonial government had stored and planned to send to forts throughout Central America so that officials might distribute them to earthquake

[475] Ibid.
[476] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 80, Exp. 1,772.

victims.[477] In addition to displaying generosity to assist administrators in responding to the disaster, businesspeople also contributed to long-term recovery through their willingness to help those in need. In 1775, businessman Juan Francisco de Uztariz offered the captain general the inn that he had built on the outskirts of New Guatemala to house the Hospital of San Juan de Dios.[478] Uztariz argued that he had resided in the new capital since the captain general had decided to abandon Antigua Guatemala. Realizing that the new city had many "urgent needs," Uztariz had decided to help the Hospital of San Juan de Dios in New Guatemala. He argued that patients were presently suffering from many "discomforts" and required Mayorga's immediate assistance. Uztariz asserted that, as the number of workers increased and as the construction of the new capital progressed, the suffering of those undergoing medical care would also become greater. To ease their troubles, Uztariz proposed moving invalids to the tavern that he had erected on the border of the new city. Uztariz claimed that, in addition to peace and quiet, the hospital would also have access to a small, enclosed field that was located nearby and that he was also willing to give up for the benefit of the clinic.[479]

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[477] AGI, Guatemala, 411.
[478] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 76, Exp. 4,567.
[479] Ibid.

The relocation of the Hospital of San Juan de Dios also caused priests to worry about people's physical and spiritual health. In response, in 1777, the parish priests of el Sagrario, San Sebastián, la Candelaria, and los Remedios in Antigua Guatemala petitioned the colonial government for permission to found a hospital in the former capital.[480] The clerics argued that, once the colonial government had decided to move the Hospital of San Juan de Dios, the clinic had stopped accepting new patients and started throwing old ones out of their beds, which had pained the clergy immensely, .[481] The priests argued that the sight of so many poor and unhealthy people who did not have access to a comfortable hospital bed, nourishment, and medicine had convinced them to seek out help from the colonial administration.

The priests were highly concerned for these people's spiritual well-being because they were not able to receive the sacraments. To illustrate their point, the clerics related the story of a man who had received a serious wound to one eye and did not receive medical attention for five days. As a result, the man's condition worsened, and, when a priest arrived to give him the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, he could not speak and had to confess his sins through signs and gestures. Furthermore, the priests contended that an Indian had died

[480] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 272, Exp. 5,922.
[481] Ibid.

without receiving Last Rights after a long illness because a priest did not arrive in time to perform the ceremony. Recognizing the need for a hospital in Antigua Guatemala, Archbishop Pedro Cortés y Larraz offered to pay to establish it, not to burden residents, and to ask for donations.[482]

While charity was important, earthquake survivors also rebuilt their lives through self-help efforts. In 1790, the Franciscan order hired architect Bernardo Ramírez to continue to oversee the construction of its monastery.[483] As a show of gratitude to Ramírez for his "useful services" and in addition to paying him, the friars pledged themselves to perform his burial and funeral rites and to say masses after his death.[484] In 1797, the Franciscans also deliberated the question of whether to sell their former temporary monastery in New Guatemala and use the proceeds from the sale of this property to build a new church and complete the construction of their new friary.[485] In 1803, the order considered selling jewelry to fund building of their new temple.[486] Father José Antonio de Goicoechea, the provincial, argued in favor of selling the jewels because they violated the order's vow of poverty. Furthermore, the friars could use the proceeds from the sale to

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[482] Ibid.
[483] Romeo Tovar Astorga, *Documentos para la historia de la orden franciscana en América Central*, vol. 2 (Tip. Nacional, 1986), 326.
[484] Ibid.
[485] Ibid., 440.
[486] Ibid., 509.

pay their debts and raise their church.[487] Likewise, in 1805, the nuns of Santa Catalina sold their former convent in Antigua Guatemala to Manuel Silvestre for 1,200 pesos.[488]

The relocation also created employment opportunities for those who sought to support the construction of New Guatemala through their work. Diego Casanga, the governor of Jocotenango, made 30,000 *reales* from the migration.[489] In 1775, the colonial government agreed to pay him an extra 1,500 *reales* a year to move the Indian town of Jocotenango from Antigua Guatemala to New Guatemala. Over the next twenty years, Casanga oversaw the building of the new town of Jocotenango and sent Indian artisans from there to the new capital to assist in its construction. When, in 1795, the colonial administration threatened to take away the raise that it had given to Casanga two decades earlier, he appealed the decision. Casanga argued that he deserved the money that he had earned through his hard work because his responsibilities as governor of Jocotenango had denied him the opportunity to devote himself to his business and farming activities.[490]

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[487] Ibid.
[488] Escritura de los sitios de la Portería y del Convento de Santa Catalina Mártir a favor de don Manuel Silvestre, Rubio Sánchez, *Monografía de la ciudad de Antigua Guatemala*, vol. 1, 415-419.
[489] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 76, Exp. 4,593.
[490] Ibid.

In 1785, colonial officials hired Ysidro de Jesús Pineda, a soldier, to haul stones for the construction of the fountain in the main plaza of New Guatemala.[491] In 1786, Pineda petitioned the colonial government to continue to allow him to cart stones. He argued that one of his oxen had been hurt because the stones that colonial officials had ordered him to transport were very large. He asserted that the opportunity that the bureaucrats had given to him had motivated others to become haulers. However, their work was easier than his had been because the architect who was overseeing the creation of the fountain now only needed small stones. Consequently, Pineda claimed that he felt like "the bone was his but others ate the meat."[492]

While the majority of disaster survivors who did not receive relief had to re-petition the colonial government for aid, a few earthquake victims appealed to the imperial government in Madrid directly, some using personal connections to make their voices speak loud and clear.[493] In 1795, Coronel Fernando Porras y Dardón sent letters to two of the most important political figures in Spain – Queen María Luisa and her lover, Manuel Godoy, Duke of Alcudia – appealing to them to help him rebuild his life. Porras y Dardón argued that he had lost

[491] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 60, Exp. 1,612.
[492] Ibid.
[493] AGI, Estado, 48, N. 5.

eleven houses in the tremor and that he had not received a lot or money from the colonial government. He also asserted that the relief board had denied his petition for relief because government assistance was now reserved for convents and public buildings. As proof of his worth, Porras y Dardón explained that he had fought alongside Captain General Matías de Gálvez in the war against the British for control over Honduras in the early 1780s.[494]

Likewise, Nicolás Ortíz de Letona sent the imperial government a request for help.[495] In 1798, Ortíz de Letona was seeking to make a better life for himself and his two sons through becoming the intendant of San Salvador. In his application, Ortíz de Letona argued that he had lost various pieces of property as a result of the earthquake. In compliance with the colonial government's orders, Ortíz de Letona moved from Antigua Guatemala to New Guatemala where he built a house. However, he claimed that the colonial administration had never given him financial support. Nevertheless, he continued to serve the king through his work as a member of the colonial bureaucracy. He had been justice of the peace of Huehuetenango, deputy of the chief chancellor of the *audiencia*, and city councilman for thirty six years.[496]

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[494] Ibid.
[495] AGI, Estado, 49, N. 64.
[496] Ibid.

The earthquake also presented slaves with opportunities to gain their freedom through acts of heroism. Felisiano de Salas, a black slave who belonged to merchant Miguel de Molina, risked his life to save his master's daughter and to protect his property in the disaster.[497] Following the tremor, Salas transported his owner's belongings from Antigua Guatemala to the second home that he owned in the town of Mixco. In gratitude, Molina promised to emancipate Salas but never gave him his manumission papers. Consequently, in January 1776, Salas sued Molina and the *audiencia* eventually set Salas free later that year.

During court proceedings, Molina made strong efforts to denigrate Salas's character, arguing that he had stolen a case of expensive chandelier crystals and had gotten Micaela de Molina, one of his master's female slaves, pregnant, causing her to run away. In response, Salas and his attorney, Antonio Talavera, asserted that Salas had returned a diamond earring that he had found among the ruins of his master's house to one of his daughters and that he had assisted Molina in the running of his business after the catastrophe. In his closing argument before the *audiencia*, Talavera claimed that Salas had been under no moral obligation to risk his life to help his owner and his family. He also appealed to collective memories of shared trauma to show that the earthquake

[497] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 2,480, Exp. 19,603.

had affected everyone. Salas, like many others, had seized the moment to save a life that was not his own and proved his worth through his heroic deeds.[498] In the end, he saved and remade himself.

Conclusions

Despite the ability of disaster to destroy lives, it also presents survivors with opportunities to rebuild their communities through public relief, charity, and self-help. The earthquake that destroyed Antigua Guatemala in 1773 tore through the city and spared no one. In response, victims sought out ways to remake themselves. The colonial government offered those who moved from Antigua Guatemala to New Guatemala public relief through giving them lots and houses to restart their lives. However, the colonial administration was not able to fulfill the promises that it had made to those who had petitioned for aid in a consistent manner. In reaction, suppliants reapplied for assistance and emphasized ideas about personal history and loyalty to persuade colonial officials that they deserved the help that the state had initially agreed to give to them. Entrepreneurs and the Catholic Church stressed the importance of philanthropy to aid those in need. In addition, people's ability to provide for themselves served as a means through which those who were ineligible for

[498] Ibid.

government aid could make efforts to improve their lives and make themselves a brighter future.

Conclusion

Disaster response efforts to the 1773 earthquake in Antigua Guatemala comprised confessions, oaths, prayers, processions, and efforts to bury the dead. Anthropologist Virginia García Acosta argues that Mexican archives contain a great amount of materials that deal with religious reactions to earthquakes in the colonial period.[499] García Acosta maintains that these sources encompass chronicles, city council minutes, and newspapers.[500] These documents stress the popular belief that earthquakes were a sign of divine wrath.[501] García Acosta advances that this accepted idea led to the rise of cults of saints who functioned as "patrons against earthquakes."[502] Furthermore, city councils sponsored rituals and bishops promoted prayer to appeal to God, prevent future catastrophes, reinforce hierarchies, and restore order.[503] In addition, geographer Alain Musset contends that, despite efforts to introduce earthquake-resistant design such as

[499] García Acosta, "Repuestas y toma de decisiones ante la ocurrencia de sismos: Propuestas metodológicas y teóricas para el estudio histórico de los desastres," in *Los sismos en la historia de México: El análisis social*, ed. Virginia García Acosta, vol. 2 (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2001), 135.
[500] Ibid., 138-142.
[501] Ibid., 136-137.
[502] Ibid.
[503] Ibid., 140-141.

the widening of walls and reducing the height of buildings, "God, the saints, and the Virgin continued to be the best protection [against tremors]."[504]

In the 1773 disaster, the city council, the captain general, and the archbishop declared the Holy Trinity the patron saint of the destroyed capital.[505] Through this ceremony, the city's political and religious leaders baptized and cleansed Antigua Guatemala and assumed a new patron saint to guard against earthquakes. Archbishop Pedro Cortés y Larraz led a religious procession[506] and encouraged inhabitants to confess their sins to appease God.[507] The captain general and the archbishop also made efforts to give the dead who had not confessed their sins before they died a proper Christian burial.[508] However, disaster response efforts were not limited to Antigua Guatemala's political and religious leaders. Nuns made contributions through leading religious processions to pacify God and intoning sacred songs to calm inhabitants' fears.[509]

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[504] Musset, "Mudarse o desaparecer: Traslado de ciudades hispanoamericanas y desastres (Siglos XVI-XVIII)," in *Historia y desastres en América Latina*, ed. Virginia García Acosta, vol. 1 (Colombia: LA RED/CIESAS, 1996), 58.
[505] Es jurada la Santísima Trinidad por Patrona de la ciudad, *Boletín del Archivo General del Gobierno* 8, no. 1 (March 1943): 149-150.
[506] Ibid., 161-162.
[507] Cadena, *Breve descripción de la noble ciudad de Santiago de los Caballeros de Guatemala, y puntual noticia de su lamentable ruina ocasionada por un violento terremoto el día veintinueve de julio de 1773*, 29.
[508] Ibid., 24.
[509] Carta de la Madre Abadesa de Capuchinas de Goatemala, Sor María Gertrudis de Yribe y Folgar, escrita a la Madre Abadesa de Capuchinas de Oaxaca (1773) in Jorge Luján Muñoz, "Nueva información sobre los terremotos de 1773" *Anales de la Sociedad de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala* 50, no. 50 (January-December 1977): 209.

Years after the catastrophe, priests continued to use sermons to attack or defend the relocation and to encourage moral reform.[510]

The colonial government's long-term disaster recovery plan involved deciding whether to move from Antigua Guatemala to the Valley of La Ermita, organizing a scientific commission to study the proposed site, and adopting earthquake-resistant building design in New Guatemala. Musset shows that colonial officials deliberated the question of whether to relocate colonial Latin American cities such as Antigua Guatemala in 1717 and Concepción, Chile, in 1751, after tremors razed both urban centers.[511] He demonstrates that administrators based these discussions on sixteenth-century Spanish laws regulating the founding of cities in colonial Spanish America and on arguments about the socioeconomic effects of resettling populations.[512]

In late eighteenth-century Guatemala, innovation influenced the bureaucracy's efforts to transfer the capital. Despite relying on sixteenth-century Spanish rules of government guiding the establishment of metropolitan areas,

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[510] Pérez Valenzuela, *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, vol. 2, 370-373. González Batres, *Sermón que en la dedicación de la iglesia de las reverendas madres Capuchinas de Guatemala predicó el sr. doctor y mtro. d. Juan Joseph González de Batres, deán de esta santa metropolitana iglesia, cathedrático jubilado en la prima de canones de esta real Universidad, y confesor ordinario de las mismas madres* 23.
[511] Musset, "Mudarse o desaparecer: Traslado de ciudades hispanoamericanas y desastres (Siglos XVI-XVIII)," in Historia y desastres en América Latina, ed. Virginia García Acosta, vol. 1 (Colombia: La RED/CIESAS, 1996), 47-49 and 61-65.
[512] Ibid.

the royal authorities also formulated new questions about the location of volcanoes and the occurrence of earthquakes in La Ermita.[513] In addition, they created a scientific commission composed of representatives from the state, Church, and city council to study the proposed site.[514]

Architectural historian Stephen Tobriner suggests that the colonial administration's decision to abandon Antigua Guatemala was the only anti-seismic strategy that it put in place after the 1773 earthquake.[515] The contributions of officials, architects, and the Economic Society to long-term recovery illustrate that the disaster management in late eighteenth-century Guatemala was more complex. The scientific commission argued that the Valley of La Ermita had narrow steep-sided valleys that would offer inhabitants escape routes in the event of an earthquake and that it had "solid ground" to facilitate the construction of anti-seismic architecture.[516] Furthermore, the captain general and the *audienicia* judges proposed widening the main plaza and imposing height restrictions on private homes and on public buildings in New Guatemala to

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[513] Pérez Valenzuela, *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, vol. 1, 107-112.
[514] González Bustillo, *Extracto, o relación methodica, y puntual de los autos de reconocimiento, praticado en virtud de comission del señor presidente de la real audiencia de este reino de Guatemala*, 28.
[515] Tobriner, "Safety and Reconstruction of Noto after the Sicilian Earthquake of 1693 – The Eighteenth Century Context," *Dreadful Visitations: Confronting Natural Disaster in the Age of Enlightenment*, ed. Alessa Johns, 57.
[516] González Bustillo, *Extracto, o relación methodica, y puntual de los autos de reconocimiento, praticado en virtud de comission del señor presidente de la real audiencia de este reino de Guatemala*, 50.

make the new capital safer.[517] They created a committee to enforce these regulations[518] and encouraged architects to train masons on earthquake-resistant design through guild reform[519] and through the establishment of academies of drawing and mathematics.[520] However, the relocation did not go as smoothly as the colonial government had originally hoped.

Thousands of residents peacefully protested the relocation, while a great number of K'iche' made efforts to revolt against the colonial government in response to the earthquake. Shortly after the calamity, the city council and Archbishop Pedro Cortés y Larraz presented sophisticated reasons against the migration that focused on the negative socioeconomic impact that it would have on the poor. The city councilmen argued that La Ermita was muddy and that it also experienced tremors.[521] The archbishop justified his decision to remain in the former capital by insisting that he had a moral obligation to stay and watch over the indigent and nuns.[522] Together with the city council members, the archbishop represented an organized and united front against the relocation.

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[517] Pérez Valenzuela, *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, vol. 1, 172 and 174.
[518] AGCA, Sig. 4,005, Exp. 30,391.
[519] AGI, Guatemala, 411.
[520] AGCA, Sig. A1, Leg. 4,640.
[521] Carta del 31 de agosto de 1773, dirigida por el Ayuntamiento a su Majestad, informándole de la ruina acaecida el 29 de julio y solicitando algunas providencias en favor del vecindario, *Boletín del Archivo General del Gobierno* 8, no. 1 (March 1943): 161.
[522] AGI, Guatemala, 657.

Instead of mobilizing and organizing, a great deal of inhabitants who opposed the move from Antigua Guatemala to New Guatemala exercised everyday forms of resistance. As James C. Scott argues,

> In the Third Word it is rare for peasants to risk an outright confrontation with the authorities over taxes, cropping patters, development of policies, or onerous new laws; instead they are likely to nibble away at such policies by noncompliance, foot dragging, deception.[523]

Residents who did not want to move practiced forms of everyday resistance that ranged from refusing to speak to visitors from the new capital to staging peaceful protests and cleanups in the old one.[524]

On the other hand, the K'iche' started a rebellion against the colonial government in response to the earthquake. According to Scott, "When such [commonplace forms of resistance] are abandoned in favor of more quixotic action, it is usually a sign of great desperation."[525] Despite the insurgency's failure, its most striking feature was how indigenous peoples' sense of their own history – the belief that Captain General Martín de Mayorga was the K'iche' king and that he had caused the earthquake to free Native Americans from colonial rule – shaped their response to cataclysm.

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[523] James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), xvi.
[524] Pérez Valenzuela, *La Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción*, vol. 2, 368-370 and 384-385.
[525] Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, xvi.

The catastrophe also created opportunities in which colonial officials gained disaster management experience, proved their worth, and obtained promotions. In his historical and political interpretation of the *relaciones de méritos y servicios*, Murdo Macleod argues,

> The problem was how to "*valer más*,"(become more worthy) or how turn *honra* (honor and status) into something more tangible . . . Thus, as a group, they were intensely preoccupied with the problem of how to turn nobility, fame, and especially deeds into position and capital. One solution was to think of merits and services as capital and to use them openly to "buy" a better position from the king or the viceroy.[526]

After the 1773 earthquake, high- and low-ranking officials – from the captain general to the new city's materials distributor – used the *relaciones de méritos y servicios* to promote their contributions to the establishment of New Guatemala and to seek out career advancement opportunities. In response, the Crown bestowed promotions and raises on administrators with emergency management experience because they had proven their worth and could use these skills to promote socioeconomic development in post-earthquake Guatemala and in other colonies.

Architects, entrepreneurs, and the poor also employed their understanding of the value of their support for the relocation to bolster petitions

[526] Macleod, "Self-Promotion: The Relaciones de Méritos y Servicios and Their Historical and Political Interpretation," *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 7, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 27.

for favors and for public relief. Like colonial officials, builders and businesspeople came to possess a self-awareness that their skills and economic resources had contributed to the socioeconomic development of New Guatemala. In response, one mulatto architect appealed to the king for permission to purchase whiteness, while Spanish and Guatemalan merchants requested titles of nobility. All of them stressed the ways in which they had given support to the new capital's creation. However, competing notions of worth shaped the Spanish monarchy's negative responses to some such petitions.

Earthquake victims made strong efforts to apply to the colonial government for public relief to rebuild their lives. In their applications for state aid, earthquake survivors emphasized a consciousness of how the disaster had weakened them financially. The catastrophe also made them increasingly dependent on the colonial government for state aid. Some expressed a strong idea of the ways in which the calamity had bolstered their loyalty to the Crown. Others illustrated that the tremor had given them a heightened sense of their own history as survivors. Through their petitioning and re-petitioning, supplicants demonstrated that the tremor had made them persistent in their attempts to reconstruct their homes and their lives. Such undertakings also

included self-help efforts – selling property to raise funds and lawsuits – through which residents tried to remake their lives on their own terms.

Some viable directions in which future research might go from where this work leaves off consist of the revival of Antigua Guatemala in the final years of the eighteenth century and post-earthquake ceremonial disputes. The colonial government's decision to reestablish Antigua Guatemala in 1799[527] was an economic response to the discovery of potassium nitrate used in the production of gunpowder.[528] In 1800, José Longinos, a Spanish scientist in Guatemala, created a report on regulating the extraction of potassium nitrate and the manufacture of gunpowder to increase the Crown's control over such natural resources.[529] Conflicts over ritual in post-earthquake Guatemala also had political implications and were ceremonial expressions of tension over the relocation. State, city, and Church officials engaged in power struggles over ceremonials and ceremonial statues. Analysis of such fights provides insight into notions of authority, identity, and disaster in colonial Latin America.

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[527] Testimonio de la superior commission conferida al señor don Ambrosio Cerdán y Pontero, caballero de la Real y Distinguida Orden Española de Carlos Tercero y Regente de esta Real Audiencia y del consejo de S. M. para la posesión de dos alcaldes ordinarios y un Procurador Síndico de esta antigua ciudad in Manuel Rubio Sánchez, *Monografía de la ciudad de Antigua Guatemala*, vol. 1, 368-403.

[528] Dictamen emitido por D. José Longinos, sobre el salitre de Antigua Guatemala. Agosto 31 de 1800 in Manuel Rubio Sánchez, *Monografía de la ciudad de Antigua Guatemala*, vol. 1, 405-414.

[529] Ibid.

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Reales cédulas (audiencia)
Repartimientos indígenas
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